

POP. TAIF
POETRY.
J. HILL, M.A.
3,6 Bds.

A

PORTRAIT OF POPERY.

BY

JOHN HILL, M.A.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, HUNTLY.

"Come and see."

ABERDEEN:

GEORGE KING, 36, ST. NICHOLAS STREET;
WAUGH & INNES, EDINBURGH; GEORGE GALLIE, GLASGOW;
P. MACDONALD, ELGIN; C. CAMERON AND R. JOHNSTON,
HUNTLY; R. KING, PETERHEAD; AND JOHN MORTIMER,
2, WIGMORE STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXIV.

2575

ABERDEEN :
PRINTED BY G. CORNWALL,
HERALD OFFICE.

PREFACE.

IN the beginning of the year 1829, the Popish priest, who then resided in this place, delivered a series of Discourses in defence of the tenets held by the Church of Rome. To the surprise of some, and the grief of others, a number, not connected with the Romish Church, attended on those occasions. The novelty of the attempt, it is believed, more than any thing else, produced that temporary excitement. It arose, however, to such a height, that the author of the following Lectures deemed it a duty which he owed to the cause of God, and to the people whom he has the happiness of living amongst, to show, in the most public manner he could, the errors of Popery, and the stand which Protestants should take against a system so full of pollution, and void of one redeeming quality to recommend it.

He would have had no scruples in delivering these Lectures, even had no direct provocation been given; but, when the truth of the gospel was publicly impugned, the call became imperious to advocate it publicly. Intimation was accordingly given to this effect, which received a welcome and a countenance far exceeding what he had anticipated.

There is just now held out a new attraction to entice unwary Protestants in this quarter—the opening of a splendid Popish chapel. It has been suggested that the Lectures formerly preached might be therefore published with advantage at the present time.

When delivering these Discourses, the author freely borrowed from the writings both of Protestants and Papists, and he has done the same in preparing the MSS. for the press. In this latter case, he has inserted, either in the body of the work, or in foot-notes, some intelligence of a more recent date. His original effort was to come at the truth through every channel within his reach, and then present it to his hearers in a

plain unvarnished manner. This he did, and still does, consider as the best mode of procedure, particularly in such a discussion.

There is another reason that seems to call for some local publication of this nature—the multitude of Papists that are to be found in several adjoining districts, especially in the county of Banff. It is therefore hoped, should the work meet the approbation of Protestants, that it may be useful in such quarters, both in putting them on their guard, and in enlightening, by the Divine blessing, some of their benighted neighbours.

It may not be improper to add, that the Writer would consider it altogether out of character and out of place, to make any thing like an *apology* for bearing an open and a candid testimony against *Popery*. At the same time, if he has given, in a single instance, an erroneous or extravagant statement, which he is not aware of, he will be ready, upon conviction, to acknowledge it; but he is decidedly of opinion that the controversy ought never to be permitted to rest for an hour, until truth universally prevails and triumphs over a

system so iniquitous, deceitful, and destructive. And now, praying for the blessing of God upon his humble attempt, he begs a serious and impartial perusal from the reader.

HUNTLY, August, 1834.

CONTENTS.

	Page
<hr/>	
LECTURE I.	
ON ROMISH TRADITIONS,	9
LECTURE II.	
ON THE HOSTILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE THE GIFT OF GOD TO MAN,	35
LECTURE III.	
ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION,	63
LECTURE IV.	
ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE,	93
LECTURE V.	
ON PURGATORY,	127
LECTURE VI.	
ON THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME,	155

LECTURE VII.

Page

ON THE IDOLATRY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME, 179

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION, THE DOCTRINE
OF INDULGENCES, AND THE CRUEL SPIRIT OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME, 203

LECTURE IX.

ON THE TENDENCY, DECLINE, AND OVERTHROW OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME, 229

LECTURE I.

ON ROMISH TRADITIONS.

WERE the matters of dispute between Protestants and Papists of minor importance, they would call for nothing beyond a secondary attention. Were the points at issue few in number, the bearings of the controversy would be much easier perceived, and much sooner discussed. It is not, however, the diversity of the things about which they differ, so much as the importance attached to these things, that gives the discussion of the various topics a weight and an interest which forbid trifling, and banish every thing bordering on indifference. Our business amounts to nothing less than a contending "for the faith once delivered unto the saints," and a defending of that truth upon which our only hopes for eternity rest. It is the aim of Popery to blast these hopes, and to rob us of the last shred of happiness. Should we yield to its demands, there is nothing left but bitter dregs, and a cup of poison:—all that is precious or desirable is bartered away for vassalage, misery, and ruin.

The undertaking we have just entered upon, is, therefore, to be prosecuted in a manner befitting the holy cause we have espoused. However much provoked, no railing accusation belongs to us. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Our arguments must not only be drawn from the testimony of Jesus, but presented in the spirit of Jesus. His truth requires no

other description of weapons. Legendary tales, lying miracles, false glosses, furious words, and fiery persecution, are instruments it never needed, never used. When men require to resort to these, an immediate indication is given of the weakness and badness of their argument.

The cause we are about to advocate, is one in the defence of which all are summoned to appear who love our common Saviour, and are partakers of the common salvation. It is the cause of truth; not more yours than mine, or mine than yours. If Joshua and the Israelites are fighting in the vale, Moses, Aaron, and Hur must be on the mount. Should the hands of Moses, when lifted up, wax weary, they must be stayed up by those who are beside him. Let us imbibe this spirit, and in divine strength go forth for God against the mighty.

Far be it from us to affirm that in the Church of Rome there is not to be found a single believer; but we do affirm that, from the hour a man becomes a Christian, he ceases to be a Papist. While he himself may be unconscious, for a time, of the extent of the change that is wrought, he is henceforth a dissenter from that faith in heart, in principle, and in practice. Let him avow what has taken place, and his mother Church will consider him an enemy, speak of him as a fiend, and pursue him, if she dare, to the death. For, although she takes to herself the name of the Holy Catholic Church, and by this snare has deluded to destruction her many ten thousands; yet Blasphemy is her name, and her deadly traffic is in the souls of men. Many and destructive are her errors; her ambition, filthiness, and cruelty, are boundless.

Perhaps some of you may be already prepared to ask, "If these things are so, how is it that, for so many years, you should have said so little concerning them?" Instead of evading an answer, I frankly and openly confess, that more ought to have been advanced on these topics, both for the instruction of the ignorant, and for the warning of the unguarded. It is an exercise I often thought of, but my purposes from time to time were subdued; not so much from an aversion to controversy, as from a dislike to the introduction of any thing which in appearance might seem to divert attention from the Friend of sinners. Even in this discussion, I trust we

shall still keep in view the determination of the apostle, "not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And may it please God, while you have set before you the corruptions of the Church of Rome, as standing in direct opposition to the glorious gospel of his grace, to excite in your breasts a deeper sense of obligation to his sovereign love and mercy than you ever felt before!

Let me entreat you at the very outset, never to resort to the haunts of "the man of sin." If you think you can do so without dishonouring God, or injuring your own souls, it is a great mistake. The time is not yet come in which you may play with safety upon the hole of this cockatrice. His very fawnings and embraces are murderous. Let no entreaties from any quarter, no rising wish to gratify curiosity, sway you to resort for once to an idol's temple. Talk not of the showy service of a Romish chapel as a mere parade, which you might witness without suffering harm yourselves, or doing harm to others. Before you enter, look at the signal. It invites professedly to the worship of the true God: this is imposition; therefore keep aloof. By thus putting you on your guard, think not that I bring any accusation against Papists for their activity in promulgating their own tenets, or for hanging out every possible allurement to draw unsuspecting Protestants into their communion. They have an undoubted right, with their neighbours, to propagate their opinions; but, while they do so, we have equally a right to show that these opinions are contrary to the Word of God. Yea, in such a season as this, the duty of girding on the harness and going forth to the combat, becomes plain and imperious. The enemy, in throwing down the gauntlet, has challenged us to the field. All we desire is, that *truth* may prevail; and we fear not the issue, if *justice* preside. Bear it however in mind, that we have no design of meddling with private character. In this contest, it is not with men we have to do, but with a system. Private character we shall ever respect; while the avowed principles of our opponents, which stand in hostile array against the truth of God, shall be met, and treated, with unshrinking freedom. Truth and justice equally demand such a form of procedure. Your situation requires it,

and especially the situation of those around us who are held in thralldom and in darkness, by the bewitching snares of the idolatrous Church of Rome. My decided conviction is, that were some of our neighbours, bewildered amid the superstition of Popery, but aware of the nature and tendency of the faith they profess, they would shrink from it with horror as from the fangs of a serpent. The Lord in mercy open their eyes that they may see!

After having resolved publicly to expose the errors of the Romish religion, three plans suggested themselves to my mind:—to show the true and legitimate bearing of all those passages of Scripture which Papists either mutilate, or, to answer their purpose, misinterpret;—to present before you the prophecies contained in the Old and New Testaments which describe the rise, nature, progress, and fall of this system of iniquity;—or, to state the tenets held by the Church of Rome, bring these to the test of Holy Writ, and in the light of truth exhibit their odiousness. There are certain advantages attending all these modes; but, after deliberately comparing them together, the decided preference was given to the last mentioned. It introduces us to our intended purpose without much preliminary labour; the plan is within the comprehension of every capacity, and the tenets to be discussed are professedly held by Papists themselves.

It must appear quite obvious to every one that, in order to the prosecution of our work, there must be some settled book of reference to which we can upon all occasions allude, and the testimony of which must finally determine the truth or error of each disputed point. Nothing can be done to purpose without this. Happily we have a book of this description, which has the impress of divinity upon it, and which God claims as his. Protestants and Papists agree that the BIBLE is divine. But while the former aver that we have no other revelation besides what is written, the latter tenaciously hold that, in addition to the written Word of God, we have apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions of equal authority with the written record. Here the two parties are at variance, and the point about which they differ is one of vast magnitude.

Were the hatred of an individual as extravagant as to make him grudge the light of heaven to the human family, with what envy would he view the sun! He would wish above every thing that the bright luminary of day were blotted out from the universe; then the moon and stars would cease to shine, and the world from end to end present one dreary gloom. But whoever may indulge it, the wish is vain. God “hath set a tabernacle for the sun,” and none can drive him from his sphere, or disturb him in his course. Still he is “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” His rays are scattered with undiminished glory and profusion. “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it.” He is quite above the reach of such an enemy to man. Supposing, however, his hatred to remain; since he cannot turn the sun into darkness, he will at least endeavour to shut up as many as possible in dens and in caves to prevent their coming forth to enjoy his light.

The Book of God is that great luminary which he has placed in the moral world, and of all the hostile attempts the destroyer of souls has made against mankind, this is the chief—to keep the Bible from reaching them; or, after being put into their hands, to keep them from prizing it. His is the kingdom of darkness, and well he knows that by means of that revelation God has determined to give liberty to the captives, and light to them who inhabit the shadow of death. Hence his enmity to the record of heaven, and the various schemes he has adopted to prevent its circulation, lessen its authority, or make it be treated as a book shut up and sealed.

It is, perhaps, impossible to conceive of a work more diabolical than to endeavour, in any shape, to shake the faith of a people regarding the oracles of inspiration. Its necessary and immediate tendency is, to lead first to scepticism, and then to infidelity. Reach this single point, and that people are plunged into a maze of uncertainty; their minds become unhinged about every thing. This unsettled state of mind is followed by indifference, and indifference lays all open for the entrance of robbers. With a settled standard to which you can always refer,

and the truth of which is acknowledged, much may be accomplished. It affords not simply an ample source from which to draw arguments in order to recommend what is right, and condemn what is wrong; but the very fact, connected with the origin of these arguments, decides the point, whatever it may be; there is no other, or higher appeal. But let this one rule be laid aside, or considered insufficient of itself, and then a door is immediately opened for endless dispute, and for designing men to introduce as divine revelation whatever they may choose to advance, or consider of advantage to themselves.

The authenticity of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is not denied by the Church of Rome; but she is guilty of what amounts to the same thing as a denial of their authenticity, and which, if possible, is even worse, as is manifest from the language of her members, and the decrees of her councils. Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent, declares, that "the greatest part of the gospel is come to us by tradition, very little of it is committed to writing," and that little, in his estimation, is of no avail without the authority of the Church. "If authority be not granted to the testimony of the Church, the writings of the Evangelists would be of no authority." Hermanus is of the same mind, and speaks most contemptuously of the Holy Scriptures themselves, if received otherwise than through the Church of Rome. "When the authority of the Church leaveth the Scriptures," says he, "they are then of no more account than *Æsop's Fables*."* Such is the common language of Papists; they consider the authority of the inspired volume to depend entirely on the decision of their Church; the Book of God is of much value, or of none at all, as the Church pleases to determine; there is lodged in her a power to declare what books are canonical and what not, and none has any grounds for believing them to be true or false, but because the Church of Rome has believed so. That Council to which you find innumerable references in Popish publications, the Council of Trent, which was held

* Morning Exercise against Popery.

in the sixteenth century, "decreed the divine authority of the Apocrypha," and, after doing so, declares, that "whosoever rejects these Apocryphal books as not canonical, is accursed." Nay more, it was "decreed that traditions should be received as of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves."*

The true rule of faith, as the Church of Rome explains it, is to believe "not merely the written Word of God, but the whole Word of God written and unwritten; that is, Scripture and tradition, and these as explained by the Catholic Church." In our present discussion, it is of importance to keep this constantly in view. Papists have thus a two-fold rule, Scripture and tradition, and the interpretation of both is given by the Church, or by the Pope, and his Bishops and Priests. You must at once perceive that there is here a power invested which is actually without limits, a power to make apocryphal books divinely-inspired at pleasure, to multiply traditions without end, and to put a meaning on God's Word, or their own fictions, which is not to be questioned but at the hazard of perdition. Tradition is one of the strongholds of Popery. Every one who cleaves to the system knows that he must abide by it, or become a heretic. It matters not how utterly useless, or how directly opposed to the written word these traditions may be; they must be received as truth, as the truth of God, and as of equal importance and authority with the Scriptures themselves. It is but lately that one of their own Bishops, Dr. Doyle, published a work in which he expatiates at great length on the excellence of tradition, on its necessity, on the dependence of Scripture upon it, and, after no little abuse poured upon any one who would dare call the truth of Romish traditions in question, he asserts with unblushing effrontery, "that the breaking of the host, the mixing of water

* Onmes libros tum veteris quam novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit Auctor, nec non traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatus, et continua successione in Ecclesia Catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit, et veneratur.—*Concil. Trident. Sess. IV.*

with wine, the very words used in blessing the chalice of benediction—these are not written in the Scriptures, yet all antiquity testifies that they were handed down by the apostles. The perpetual virginity of the mother of God, the descent of Christ into hell—are either not written, or not so distinctly written, as they are believed in the Church; but they are not the less revealed by God on that account; they are a part of that good deposit which Timothy received from Paul, 2. Tim. i. of that form of sound speech which this latter delivered to his beloved disciple before many witnesses, and which he commanded him to entrust to faithful men who would be fit also to teach others.”* Well may modesty blush at this language; it is blasphemous, and let it not be repeated. But this same dignitary adds: “The truth is, that tradition is a part and parcel of divine revelation, or rather revelation once consisted of tradition exclusively, a portion of which was afterwards recorded in writing.—It is obvious to every person versed at all in antiquity, that the written portion of the law was only a supplement to tradition, and that the meaning of it wherever it is doubtful or difficult, cannot be ascertained unless by the light of this same tradition.—It is little short of insanity in a Christian to deny the authority of the Church; but to admit it, and deny either the existence or necessity of tradition, is an incomprehensible absurdity—the fruits of gross ignorance, of intolerable presumption, or, of the most lamentable fanaticism.”† This Popish author sets before us, without disguise, the universal opinion of his Church respecting this matter, and it is for this reason I have quoted his language. I need hardly add that this is a thing entirely different from the profession of Protestants, who believe the Scriptures to be the *only* rule of faith and manners.

This traditionary scheme is not a new one. Romanists, in adopting it, have but followed the practice of the Pharisees, who, while they were the bitterest enemies

* Letters on the State of Education in Ireland, and on Bible Societies, pp. 42, 43.

† Ibid. pp. 51, 52.

of Christ and his Gospel, were great sticklers for tradition. There is, perhaps, no way by which this matter may be more easily explained, especially to those who may have heard little concerning tradition, than by drawing a brief comparison between the traditions of the Jews and those of the Popish Church. If you once become acquainted with the Jewish oral law, and the deference paid to it, you are prepared to meet something of the very same kind in the Church of Rome. What the Jews called the oral law, was held by them in equal veneration with the written Word of God. They hesitated not to affirm that both laws, written and traditionary, were given by God to Moses on mount Sinai. That which Moses wrote, they called the written law; that which was handed down by the tradition of the elders from generation to generation, they called the oral law. Of the written law they declared, that in many places it was obscure and defective, and that without the oral law it was no perfect rule. So does the Church of Rome with the New Testament; she is for ever talking of it as a dark and imperfect book, a book of letters and tracts, and quite unfit of itself as a perfect standard.

The Jews observed the written law no otherwise than as it was expounded by their oral law. No matter how opposite their own traditions might be to the record of heaven, it was the explanation their elders put upon it, not the law as given by God, which they adhere to. No commandment could be plainer, more reasonable, or more binding than the fifth—“Honour thy father and mother; and he that curseth father or mother let him die the death.” But this divine mandate was opposed and rendered useless by tradition; for, according to it, if a son should feel inclined to present a gift professedly to the altar, in order to enrich his avaricious guides, he was freed from all future obligation to his parents; the substance by which he might have done them good was devoted to the altar, and their claim upon him ceased. Upon the whole of this case, the great Lawgiver himself remarks, and the remark holds true not only in this instance, but in all others: “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”* It

* Matt. xv. 3—6.

is precisely so with Romish traditions ; the Scriptures must be received in no other way than as these explain them. However evidently they may stand in opposition, this is the rule of interpretation. The written word is not permitted to speak for itself, then the system of Popery would be annihilated. It must be expounded by tradition, and every such exposition, to whatever it applies, makes of none effect the commandment of God.

The Jews at all times preferred the oral to the written law ; it answered their wicked purposes to do so. Yea, so very great was the preference, that they compared the former to wine, the latter to water. So it is with Romanists, and for the very same reason.

The history which the Jews give of their oral law is briefly as follows :—That God gave it to Moses at the same time that he gave him the law which he was commanded to commit to writing ; that the oral law is the explanation of the written law ; that while the one was to be written in a book, the other was to be delivered by word of mouth, to be preserved by memory, and handed down in this manner from age to age. In reference to this affair, it has been well observed, “how strange it would have been, if the fables, and crimes, and speculations of heathens had been thus transmitted to after ages, while the history, the laws, and the oracles of the sacred nation had no other monument than a transient and treacherous succession of impressions on the human memory—no other channel of communication than the fleeting sounds of the human voice ! Miracles could, indeed, preserve any thing, in any way ; but God works not miracles without a suitable occasion.”* They even pretend to have the names of those favoured individuals in each succeeding generation to whom this oral law was committed. Moses first told Aaron, Eleazer, and the Sanhedrim. He committed the whole afterwards in a special manner to Joshua—Joshua to Eleazer—Eleazer to Phinehas, and then follows a long catalogue of prophets who lived in after times, to whom the

* Ewing's Essays to the Jews, vol. I. p. 9.

secrets of their oral law were entrusted.* Exactly in the same manner the Church of Rome pretends that her traditions have been handed down from the Apostles through the Popes and Bishops to the present day.

It is hardly necessary to state, far less to occupy time in proving, that the Jewish traditions were from first to last the fictions of designing, crafty, and wicked men ; for while the Lord Jesus, in the passage just quoted, refers for illustration only to one instance, he speaks of their traditions as a whole, and asserts without exception concerning them, that they were false and pernicious. This holds true to an equal extent with the traditions of the Church of Rome. They have no foundation in Scripture, or any other authentic history. They are all forgeries, and are all at variance with the Word of God.

It is not to be forgotten, that the Jewish oral law was never heard of until long after the canon of the Old Testament had been completed. From Genesis to the close of the volume you hear not one word concerning it. To attempt the introduction of such a thing while a prophet lived had been a useless effort. The enemy seized on the time in which he was most likely to succeed in deluding the people, and leading them away from the glorious light of truth into the horrid darkness of traditionary jargon. So it is exactly in the case before us. The New Testament had for ages been completed before a whisper of apostolic tradition was ever heard of. The commencement of the dark ages favoured the scheme which has done such a world of mischief.

The traditions of the Jews continued to increase until the middle of the second century, when Rabbah Judah pretended to collect the whole, and to put them in writing ; because the Jewish nation was then to all appearance to be so scattered that they could no longer retain the oral law otherwise. Noxious weeds rapidly increase. When these lying fables were all gathered together, they contained sixty-three tracts called the

* Owen on the Hebrews, vol. i. p. 124.—Prid. Con. Part I. Book V.

Mishna, which, by the poor Jews given up to delusion, were every where received with the greatest veneration. The learned men amongst them began to make comments upon this Mishna, which comments received the name of the Gemera. The original Mishna, and the commentaries upon it, were together called the Talmud. By the sixth century this book had increased to a great size. The last edition of it that was printed contained twelve folio volumes,*—not a book, surely, which divine wisdom would give to the world; yet the blinded Jews “have in a manner, for the sake of their traditions, annulled all the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, and set the Talmud to be their Bible in their stead.” Of Romish traditions very little comparatively is known. It serves their purpose better to keep all connected with the system in mysticism. Whenever it suits them, or they have a purpose to serve, tradition is their ready handmaid to assert any thing they please, and tradition with them is ever of equal authority, at least, with the written word.

However false, absurd, and burdensome, the oral traditions of the Jews might be, the teachers imposed them on the people, and the people submitted. “In the learning and practising of these things consists the whole religion and worship of the Jews; there being not the most absurd saying of any of their doctors, in those huge heaps of folly and vanity, that they do not hold to be equal unto, nay, that they are not ready to prefer before the written word.”† Just so it is with the priests and the people of the Church of Rome. Their traditions are monstrous; they tend only to evil, and to the dishonouring of the Word of God; but however untrue, extravagant, and wicked, the people must never call the truth of them in question, must either unreservedly believe them or cease to be Papists; there is no alternative so long as they abide in that Church, but to set their seal to all the lying miracles, to all the usurped

* Prid. Con. Part I. Book V.

† Owen on the Hebrews, vol. I. p. 126. See also Rise, Fall, &c. of the Jews, p. 29.

authority of the Pope and his Bishops, and to all the blasphemy connected with their sacraments, although these things are as contrary to Scripture as light is to darkness.

For the sake of illustration, I shall once more refer to Jewish traditions. It is not enough to say that our Saviour never recommended them, as if the subject were a doubtful or an indifferent one; he uniformly spoke of traditions with the most marked disapprobation; he openly lifted up his warning voice against them, that all might beware. Sad, indeed, were the fruits of the Jews' adherence to tradition. To this source may be traced their erroneous views of Messiah's character, their rejecting him when he appeared, their persecuting his followers, and their final ruin as a nation. Their blind devotedness to traditions is still their misery: still they cling to them; but when their hearts shall turn to the Lord, this vail shall be taken away. So it is with the members of the Church of Rome. At present they give credit to things which are glaringly false, and prefer these falsehoods to the sacred and saving truths of the Holy Spirit. In this horrid snare they are caught, and by these terrible fetters they allow themselves to be bound: yea, their cruel and tyrannical guides, to whose rule they have succumbed, teach them to consider all as execrable heretics who refuse to receive as divine revelation their own base-born progeny of lies. But the system is wrong at the foundation, and in vain do they huddle together such heaps of rubbish for its support. The time is not distant when all the nations of the world will joyfully receive the Old and New Testaments as the only and complete record of heaven,—when oral tradition shall be buried in forgetfulness, till there be none left to bury; or if a shred of their former existence remain, it will be only for “an abhorring to all flesh.”

The whole of this comparison I close with one remark: That as the sect of the Pharisees, who so tenaciously held the traditions of the elders, had, in the total absence of true piety, a great show of godliness; so no Church on earth has ever exclaimed with half the vehemence, “The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!” as the apostate Church of Rome. In proportion to the number and grossness of her corruptions, this exclama-

tion has been the more loudly and frequently repeated. She has strenuously endeavoured to make it be believed that she is the only true Church, and with her impudent face and much fair speech has she deluded and ruined multitudes of the human family. Of all the schemes ever invented to destroy man, hers is the most widely destructive. It is high time to wrench the surreptitious mask from her Babylonish forehead, and to exhibit her, as she really is, to the gaze of her friends and her foes. It is not to be concealed that the whole system of Popery, root and branch, is opposed to the religion which is able to save the soul from death. There is too much at stake to present the matter in disguise; and to be satisfied of the truth of what is advanced on the subject under review, you have only to acquaint yourselves with the treatment which the words of divine inspiration receive from the Church of Rome. The mark is quite prominent; she herself seeks not to hide this; she even glories in her shame; and to all who have eyes to see, it points her out as the mother of abominations. Just think on the impudent and vigorous efforts of her leaders to make their adherents believe that the word of the living God depends entirely upon the authority of the Church of Rome, and upon the explanation of her Priests, for its sole claim to credit, and for the whole meaning of whatever it contains; that, in short, it contains truth or error, and is light or darkness, just as they please to affirm or deny. This is the simple state of the case. How pitiable is their situation who are kept under such vassalage, and who willingly permit themselves to be trodden upon by such hard-hearted taskmasters! The loss they sustain is unspeakable; and their being bewildered at this point accounts in a great measure for the otherwise inexplicable maze in which they afterwards wander. Their receiving for truth the traditions of men involves them in this labyrinth.

It was asserted long ago, and still the assertion is true, that "the first work of antichrist is to take away the truth, and to change it into falsehood, error, and heresy. The second work of antichrist is to cover falsehood over with a semblance of truth, and to assert and maintain lies by the name of faith and virtues, and to dispense falsehood, intermingled with spiritual things,

unto the people under his subjection."* Papists say they have reasons for giving credit even to tradition. They endeavour to support the system with all its absurdities by telling us, that for two thousand years the Church had nothing but tradition. This is true, if they allow us to add, that all those who handed down the truth from one age to another were inspired men. There were, besides, from Adam to Moses, but few things comparatively to hand down from father to son; and the age of man during that period extended to such a length that all that was to deliver passed through very few hands. The immense difference between the two cases is, that the patriarchs did not hand down from one to another human tradition, but divine revelation. God manifested himself to each of them. What was given at first, was given by him; and every following addition to the original grant, emanated from the same pure, unerring source. Human tradition had nothing to do with the affair.

We are also told that the apostle exhorts Christians to be obedient to the traditions, whether taught by word or epistle.† This is likewise true, but just in the same way as in the former case. The apostles, like the patriarchs, were inspired men, and whether they gave advice by word or by letter, it was by the same divine authority. It requires no little management to make the traditions the apostles mention and Romish traditions to have, even in appearance, the slightest similitude. The manœuvre necessary to produce this likeness betrays its origin. In reality, there is all the difference between them that there is between the Word of truth and lying fables. To satisfy yourselves, look at the passage: take nothing of the kind upon any man's bare assertion. The apostle says, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." Now I beg to ask any person, however weak his intellect, if he only knows the simple meaning of the terms in the passage, and is able to con-

* Blair's Hist. of the Waldenses, vol. I. p. 507.

† 2 Thess. ii. 15.

nect the end of the shortest and plainest proposition with its beginning,—Is there any mystery here? is there any countenance given here to oral traditions which are not found also written? Yea, does not the apostle style “our epistle,” that which was written, “traditions,” equally with that which was taught “by word”? To every one whose mind is not filled with prejudice, and who is not fixed in his determination to receive all as true which certain men choose to impose, it must appear most manifest that when the apostles of Jesus Christ went into different places to preach the gospel, they did so by the guidance of the Holy Spirit; that as their labours were not stationary, they, in order to edify the Churches which they had planted in different places, wrote them by the same infallible guidance as that by which they spoke; therefore, when they refer to the traditions delivered unto those to whom they wrote, they refer to the word they formerly uttered when present with them, that is, to the glorious gospel of the grace of God, “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.—For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”* If present with them, they knew nothing among them but Christ and him crucified; if absent, the topic they dwelt upon in writing was the same. What they taught, they in substance wrote: their writings have come down to us pure and entire, and these writings in connexion with the rest of Scripture constitute the only sure rule of faith, and the only proper rule of practice. And what is there, I should like to know, in all this which has the most distant tendency to puzzle or confound? or what connexion is there between all this and the absurdities of Popish tradition? The two things have no connexion; they are at once distant from each other and quite dissimilar. Leave the inspired oracles to speak for themselves, and you find no difficulty in perceiving the foun-

* 2 Cor. v. 19—21. 1 Peter ii. 24.

dation of hope laid for the guilty,—a foundation sure and steadfast, perspicuous to every eye, sufficient for every case, and most evidently the work of God; but let traditionary legends mingle with, and be added to, these sacred writings, and the view is darkened, the glory sullied, and all becomes enveloped in irksome, dreadful uncertainty. When told that a great part of the New Testament was never written at all, but left to be handed down from age to age by word of mouth, and that these traditions are as much the Word of God as what the apostles of the Lamb wrote, what are you left to think? or where can you take your stand? Such, however, is the professed creed of every Papist. Try the ground: you are sure of nothing: you grope in darkness at every step: night and the shadows of death are before, behind, and on every side of you. Scripture and tradition produced by the same Divine Spirit, opposed to each other, yet both to be received as the truth of God! It is impossible; the one or the other is an imposture, and must be abandoned. But all agree that the written word is of heavenly origin; and why not abide by it as all right-hearted men have done from the beginning? What ails the Church of Rome at the holy Scriptures? Because there is much in her doctrine and worship opposed to the Scriptures. Purgatory, prayers for the dead, with such like, are all the spurious progeny of tradition; and so soon as you allow the Bible to be the book of God, and permit it to speak for itself, you are compelled to conclude that the Popish religion is a religion of lies—a system of opposition to God, and of imposition on man.

But Romanists cling to tradition with a death-grasp. Give these up, and, they know it well, their tower of strength is demolished. Hence the many shifts they have fallen upon to defend this stronghold from ruin. Among other efforts, they have with much vaunting attempted to prove that Protestants depend on tradition as well as Papists. It is not the case. The tradition of a written testimony they certainly avail themselves of to a certain extent, which shall just now be explained; but we never heard of them laying any weight whatever upon oral traditions. The works of various writers, which were composed at an early period of the

Christian era, have come down to us. In these there are found many quotations from all the books of the New Testament. "We have quotations and references to these books from five apostolic fathers, the companions of the original writers. We have their testimonies sustained and extended by their immediate successors; and as we pursue this crowded series of testimonies downwards, they become so numerous, and so explicit, as to leave no doubt on the mind of the inquirers, that the different books of the New Testament are the publications of the authors, whose names they bear; and were received by the Christian world, as books of authority from the first period of their appearance."* Now, while an inquiring mind feels a satisfaction in discovering that all the writings contained in the New Testament were considered and treated as inspired by those who lived in the same age with the apostles, and in the ages that immediately succeeded, this kind of testimony is entirely a different thing from the traditions which the Romish church adheres to. In it you find abundance of references to those holy books, but no traditions of an oral kind are hinted at, no additions to the sacred canon were attempted or proposed. At that early period, the Christian church was sadly rent by the disputes which were entered into by her professed members; but whatever point any one wished to defend, he must maintain it from Scripture or give it up; no other standard was sought to or permitted. When any tenet was shown from Scripture to be false, the holder of it had nothing before him but to acknowledge his error. Not so with Papists. Whenever they are shown from the Bible that what they advance is contrary to its hallowed doctrines, they refer you to the Church and to tradition; that is, the word of inspiration will be quoted when it suits their purpose, but when it speaks against them they abandon it, and betake themselves to another resort—the traditions of the Church. In a word, while by Christians this book is received and esteemed as the only revelation given by God to man, and as containing

* Chalmers' Evidence and Authority of the Christian Revelation, p. 137.

every thing necessary to salvation, it is not the standard book of the Church of Rome.

Should any one suppose that too much time has been occupied with the subject of tradition, I might justly reply that the half has not been told of its abominations, and its direful results; but this much I thought proper to advance, that you might distinctly see for yourselves the difference which exists between Protestants and Papists concerning this grand, this cardinal point.

Before concluding, I shall very briefly advert to the inspiration and completion of the canon of Scripture. Long before Christ's appearance in the flesh, all the books of the Old Testament were written, collected, and received by the Church of God as divine. Such care and scrupulosity were manifested by those to whom these oracles were committed, that they not only counted the books and sections, but numbered the very words and letters; so that whatever disputes might arise, there was no room left for disagreement concerning the written record. That matter was settled. Many sins were the Jews guilty of; but that they ever added to, changed, or mutilated the word of God is not among the catalogue of crimes with which they are charged.

Something very like to what we have mentioned in reference to the Old Testament, took place with the New. At a very early period of the Christian era, all the books it now contains were received as canonical, and were widely circulated. These are well known truths which even the Church of Rome cannot contradict; but, aware that these books are not sufficient for her purpose, she has poured contempt upon them a thousand-fold more than all the professed infidels that have ever appeared to disgrace the human name. She professes that the Bible is the book of God, and at the same time proclaims that it is a book full of darkness. She declares that, although it is the book of God, it is unfit, yea dangerous, to be given to the world as the Author has given it. She even goes the length to say, that, although it is God's book, it cannot be understood and is worth nothing, but in connexion with apostolic and ecclesiastical tradition. The propagation of such doctrine bespeaks the existence of daring impiety. It insults to his face the wise and gracious Author of the

Scriptures. Protestants! how can you relish it?—can you quietly hear your Bible denominated a book void of authority aside from the legends of the Church of Rome?—can you hail with pleasure the intimation, that your only charter for eternity is full of doubts, darkness, and inconsistencies? According to the Church of Rome, you either cannot comprehend it, it is so obscure and illegible, or if you think you do, or if in reality you do, still it matters nothing; without gainsaying or investigation, you must stoop to her authority, who, it seems at her pleasure, can canonize apocryphal books—of course can as easily take away as add. Henceforth, you are not sure of the truth or stability of a single doctrine, nor can you after this rely with safety upon the faithfulness of a single promise. This is to rob you of your sheet-anchor, and to leave you at once on a billowy ocean, without helm, without ballast, and without a pilot. Yet all this, by much cunning flattery, and with a merciless hand, has that apostate Church sought to accomplish. Alas! how many have gone after her like oxen to the slaughter, and they who go in unto her return not again. Her door is the gate of hell. It is quite impossible for any to submit to the tenets of that Church without an entire renunciation of all that is precious, and of all that constitutes the birth-right of every rational and immortal creature. Not one of her members must think for himself upon matters of the last importance, but calmly and passively yield up these into the hands of fellow-mortals, as if they indeed could secure a passport into heaven, in spite of the will of Him who has the keys of the invisible world.

In conversing once with a *sensible papist* about the only way of salvation, and of his personal accountability to God; his ready and unequivocal reply was: “I go to chapel—I say my prayers—and, if I perish, the *priest* will have to answer for it.” What prostration of soul! What arrogance on the one hand, and desperate subjection on the other! That man was taught to consider the Bible as a book above his comprehension, as a dark book, and dangerous for him to consult.

It is freely granted that the Old Testament is comparatively a dark book. The New Testament is much

plainer; but you never read of God’s people complaining of the obscurity even of the old covenant Scriptures. In appealing to God himself, David exclaims, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” He found this in his own individual experience to be true or not; if not true, in making this appeal, he was guilty of the vilest hypocrisy. If the testimony of God be so dark a book, the same person must have been egregiously mistaken when he asserted that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” So must the Apostle of the Gentiles have been mistaken; for he also declares to his son Timothy, “That from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” And Peter was of the same mind with Paul, for he also speaks of the Scriptures as “a light that shineth in a dark place.”* There cannot be a doubt that He who gave the Bible to the world knew better how to address the creatures of his own hand so as to be understood by them, than all the popes, and cardinals, and priests, that ever flaunted under the dome of St. Peter’s, or imposed themselves upon the credulous in other quarters.

But it has been stoutly objected, that there are so many different opinions and sects among Protestants, who all appeal to the Scriptures, that it is impossible *from them alone* to know what is the meaning of revelation. There appears at first sight a feasibility here; the objection seems to have some force, for that divisions were found in the Church even in the apostles’ days, and that they have too much abounded in all ages since, is what can serve no good purpose to conceal; but we put the question seriously, Does tradition added to revelation mend the matter?—Have there been no divisions in the Church of Rome?—Is hers a society of concord and tranquillity? All who are acquainted with her history, know that her councils have been embroiled

* Ps. cxix. 105. Ps. xix. 7, 8. 2 Tim. iii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 19.

with the most violent disputes, and have become the scene of most disgraceful tumults—even to blood-shedding. To this day there is among Papists nothing like an agreement as to the precise quarter in which the great power is to be lodged which the Church arrogantly claims to herself. Whether it reside in the pope alone, or whether in the pope in conjunction with his bishops, or where it is, they cannot tell; so that whoever rests his hope on what that Church says, rests it on a baseless fabric. Her priests feel this keenly, and dread the test of scrutiny. Their scheme cannot bear examination; it shuns the light. The Scriptures have too much candour, honesty, and plainness for them. You may rest assured that their objection to these writings, is not their chaotic darkness, but their effulgent light: hence the dread, lest the most worthless of their flock be left to listen to Scripture-teaching.

You may remember how a Romish priest lately treated a minister of the gospel in Edinburgh, who was attending one of the most abandoned wretches, the very recollection of whose deeds is abhorrent in the extreme. He was lying under sentence of death, and the minister referred to wished to continue his visits, that he might point out to him his guilt, his danger, and the only possible way of escape; that is, he would have led him to the Bible, and to the glorious Saviour whom it reveals. But the priest was afraid that, as the criminal had but a few days to live, he could not be so profitably employed, if he were liable to be distracted by conflicting opinions on matters of faith;—consequently, the Protestant minister's visits were, at the request of the culprit, discontinued. Now, judge of this. Suppose the prisoner had belonged to any professing body of Christians, is there one of all the ministers of the gospel who would have had the least dread of his receiving injury by the visits of a pious individual of any persuasion? The thing could not be. Having alluded to this case for the sake of illustration, you will permit me to state how it terminated. Of all the horrid scenes in that man's murderous career, there was nothing half so shockingly appalling as the Popish counsel given him on the scaffold:—"Say your creed, and when you come to the words Lord Jesus, give the signal, and die with

his blessed name in your mouth."* Truly the Church of Rome deludes to destroy; her traffic is in the souls of men, and in her skirts their blood is found.

Should the question still be put, how do you know that the Bible is the Word of God? I answer, not by Popish tradition. I know and am satisfied concerning the authenticity of the Old Testament, by the many quotations taken from it by our Lord and his apostles, who never proved a doctrine by traditions. I know also, that before Peter's death, all the epistles of Paul were known and read, and received as parts of divine revelation: of course all the gospels. We are assured, likewise, not by oral tradition, but by written records, that the remaining few were soon afterwards added, and that a heavy woe is denounced against the man who shall take away or add more.†

But, if still the question should be repeated, it might be answered, without the fear of taunts, or the dread of an overthrow, that the authenticity of God's holy Word may be known by any one who will take the trouble carefully to peruse and ponder it for himself. He will there find doctrines discussed and truths revealed which human ingenuity never could invent. He will find a discovery made which he did not anticipate—a discovery of his own character, of the very thoughts and intents of his heart—a mirror so true to life that he may, he must, be convinced that no hand but a hand divine could form it; and that the Author of the Bible is no other than the Author of his existence.

Aside, then, entirely from these sources of error and uncertainty, we thankfully adhere to the written Word as complete in itself, as a precious record, bearing marks of its divine origin, clear, full, and satisfactory, even as the sun in the firmament, which declares the glory of God. We take our stand here, and feel our footing firm, free alike from shifting sand and cumbrous rubbish. We boldly and triumphantly take possession of this high tower, confident that our fortress is secure;

* Ed. Weekly Journal, Jan. 28, 1829.

† Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

and, while occupying it, we are neither ashamed nor afraid to speak to the enemy in the gate.

In next discourse I shall show you that there exists such an enmity between the Church of Rome and the Scriptures, that she has done all in her power to keep them from being read by the people—a heavy, but not an unfounded charge. To conclude at present :

Were it possible for us to gain a hearing from our neighbours who cling to traditions, we would say to them :—There is one thing in which we all agree, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of divine origin. Will you, then, be entreated to compare candidly what is written there with the traditions which are imposed upon you by your priests ? Such a request is put with any thing but a disputatious spirit ; it is proposed and pressed upon your attention with the simple design of leading you to the truth. The examination, at any rate, could do you no injury : make it, and act from conviction. Believe the testimony of Jesus, whatever it may lead you to abandon or adhere to. Honour him thus far, to give the decided preference to his written, “ sure word of prophecy.” “ The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

Again ; for the most part, Protestants pay far too little attention to the heavenly oracles which they profess to believe. It is this mournful circumstance which prepares men for looking with a careless eye upon those who would substitute something else in their room, and which prepares them for meeting, with all but perfect reconciliation, those who deny and envy the Scriptures that high place in which their Author has fixed them. Remember, I beseech you, that your creed may be sound, while your hearts are not right with God. You may see through all the absurdities of the Popish faith, and of other unscriptural systems, and yet remain in unbelief. You may bear the honourable name of Protestant, yea of Christian, and at last go down to the grave not washed from your iniquity. Without faith it is impossible to please God : none shall see him without holiness. Take this into your immediate, your deep consideration ; then you will value God’s Word in another manner than you have done. With the most pressing, piercing ur-

gency it entreats you not to neglect the great salvation. It sets open before you the way of escape, and constantly points you to the Lamb of God.

From the subject we have this night been contemplating, we are likewise taught, that the religion of the Church of Rome is artfully framed to suit the corrupt propensities of man. All traditions have this tendency, and are therefore opposed to that holy Book which never trifles with sin, but uniformly declares the necessity of being born again, in order to an entrance into the kingdom of God ; which shows the sinner the error of his ways, calls him to repentance, and commands him to bring forth fruit meet for repentance ; which points him only and always to Jesus, and implores him to flee to this Redeemer from sin and from wrath. Upon every one that is disobedient to these heavenly entreaties, it pronounces the most fearful threatenings, and beseeches him, by the mercies and by the terrors of the Lord, to escape for his life in this the day of God’s forbearance. But the unrenewed heart loves not such tidings ; there is nothing it loves like sin which the Scriptures condemn, and nothing it hates like holiness which the Scriptures enjoin. To meet this disposition, the Church of Rome has substituted heathenism and idolatry in the room of pure godliness—such heathenism and idolatry as are quite congenial to the vitiated taste of man. The Scriptures never speak peace to the sinner going on in his trespasses ; but whosoever enters that communion gets rid of the troubler. He has only to attend to certain ceremonies, pay certain dues, and say certain prayers, to obtain from his priest the forgiveness of all his trespasses. All this (and who can help perceiving it ?) is just what suits unrenewed man. He cannot do without some religion, and here he finds exactly what fits him. To this source you may trace the dismal extent of Popery through the nations of this world.

Let me exhort those of you who love your Bibles indeed, to prize them more highly than ever, and to rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. Nothing could be more distressing than to have your confidence shaken in the authority of Scripture, or to have your minds perplexed about its authenticity. You could ill endure the interference of those who

would insinuate that you are sure of the truth and importance of nothing the Word contains, but simply as they choose to interpret it; and that it is only in so far as they are pleased to inform you, that you can know any thing of its celestial origin. Be very thankful to God that he has delivered you from such wolves. To be told that the Word can be of no service to you but in connexion with the traditions of men, would grieve you to the heart, because it impugns the wisdom of your God; but even this would not lower your estimation of the inspired Volume, nor lessen your attachment to it. It is as dear to you as before, because you have no faith in traditions; and still you hold it fast as your most precious treasure, and spurn with indignation the idea of its being enhanced in value by human appendices. These you treat not only as useless but hurtful, and cling to the quick and powerful Word as to that which, by the divine blessing, is quite sufficient of itself to guide you to the land of uprightness. O that those whom the cruel Church of Rome crushes in the dust may be speedily delivered from her intralling yoke! Indulge no feelings against such that might either be injurious to yourselves, or unproductive of good to them. Act in character. God only can open their eyes. Pray for them. This is almost all you can do. You can hardly expect them to listen to your advice; for they are taught to look upon their Protestant neighbours as heretics and accursed. But they cannot hinder you to pray for them; and, O! forget them not in that quarter to which you have freedom of access. Pray that the efforts made to keep them in delusion may prove abortive, and that God in mercy may deliver their souls from death. Let this advice have its due weight; it will do them no injury; if they should even still continue blinded, your prayers will return fraught with blessing into your own bosoms.

LECTURE II.

ON THE HOSTILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE THE GIFT OF GOD TO MAN.

THAT "the laity may *safely* read" the Word of God is denied by Papists, even in this country. In examining the public councils of their Church, and the no less public edicts of her head, the Pope of Rome, you find the thing unequivocally established, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are, by every possible means, to be kept out of the hands of the unlearned, and out of the hands of all, except such as the bishops and priests may deem fit or capable to possess the same. This we shall fully prove after looking at that passage of Scripture, which, above every other, is brought by them into prominence with the view of showing that the promiscuous reading of the Word of God is fraught with danger. It may, however, be proper before doing so, to produce at least one document expressing the sentiments of that Church upon the subject. For this purpose, we fix upon the seventh article of the council of Toulouse: "We forbid the permission of the books of the Old and New Testaments to all lay-people, except, perhaps, they will have the Psalter, or some breviary for the divine service, or the prayer-book of the blessed Virgin for devotion. Most expressly forbidding them to have the said books translated into the vulgar tongue. We command that whosoever shall be accused of heresy, or noted with suspicion, shall be deprived of

the assistance of a physician.”* Add to this, part of the acknowledged creed of every papist: “I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things which have been delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and œcumenical councils, and especially by the holy synod of Trent; and all things contrary thereto, and all heresies condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church, I do likewise condemn, reject, and anathematize.” This is the twelfth article of his creed, and the whole may be seen at the end of the published canons and decrees of the council of Trent. To this, I repeat, every Papist is bound; and from this, the inference is manifest, that every Papist is an enemy to the circulation of the Scriptures among the common people. Hence the extraordinary effort to have some semblance of defence from Scripture itself to vindicate their holding a tenet so glaringly opposed to the well-being of man. The passage just alluded to is for ever adduced in connexion with this topic. It reads thus: “And account *that* the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.”† It will not be expected that I at present advance more in the way of criticism from these words than what belongs immediately to the subject under consideration; but, in so far as this is called for, I solicit your attention to the following remarks:—

1. That before this second epistle of Peter was written, all the epistles of Paul had been collected together, and were acknowledged and received as a portion of divine revelation *by the Churches of Christ*. The question here is, Who composed these Churches? The epistles themselves inform us: they were saints, but they were not all *fathers* to whom the apostle wrote. Many of them had been but recently brought into the

fold of the great Shepherd, who were denominated the lambs of his flock, and, while the Churches existed, this kind of persons would be found in them, whose name and character were *babes* in Christ; yet these very epistles were at first given to the whole, and were ever after common property. They were all to have access to them, without the concealment of any part, and without abridgment of any kind.

2. Epistolary correspondence is of all other modes of writing the plainest, and approaches more nearly to conversational or familiar discourse than any other species of composition whatever. Hence the things hard to be understood, we are led to suppose, refer to some of the *doctrines* contained in the epistles, and not to the *manner* of expounding these doctrines, or even to the *epistles* themselves. But there is no call to speak as if the thing were uncertain. It is beyond a doubt that the antecedent to the relative “which” is not the word “epistles,” but the word “things,” as appears evident when the two verses are read in connexion. Peter here mentions one thing, which, he says, Paul had also mentioned, a thing which is “hard to be understood,” and which “the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction;” namely, “the long-suffering of our Lord which is salvation.” The long-suffering of our Lord is indeed salvation to all who know the time of such merciful visitation, and who suffer not the things which belong to their peace to be hid from their eyes ere they be saved by them; but certainly there is something deeply mysterious in the fact, that many, amidst the long suffering of our Lord, sin on;—and that our Lord, nevertheless of the enormity of their guilt, bears so long with them, presents before every contemplative mind an unsearchable depth of mystery. On the other hand, there is, perhaps, not one doctrine in all the range of Christian theology more abused and oftener wrested by the impenitent to their own destruction than the very doctrine we are speaking of. Mark well how the matter stands. Our Lord warns sinners of their danger, invites them to look to him for salvation, urges the importance of the affair upon their immediate attention, and gives solemn intimation that, while he now waits

* Blair's History of the Waldenses, vol. I. p. 365.

† 2 Peter iii. 15, 16.

to be gracious, he will not continue always so to wait.* Such is the language he utters; but many hear it all as if they heard it not, and treat it as a thing of mere indifference. They talk coolly of to-morrow, reckoning upon something being done in that period, over which Jehovah has spread an impenetrable vail. None can tell what shall be on the morrow; but every one knows that God has already exercised much patience, and that many, all the while, have but hardened their hearts in sin. Now this doctrine is repeatedly mentioned by Paul in his epistles, where he sharply reproves the ingratitude and wickedness of those who pervert the divine forbearance, and abuse the goodness of God. "But we are sure," he says in one place, "that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds."† One can hardly forbear thinking that these very words were immediately in Peter's view when he referred to the epistles of his brother Paul.

It may be also added, that, in connecting the term "which" to "things" and not "epistles," the original text bears me out—the term "which" being in a gender that agrees not with "epistles" but with "things," as every Greek scholar may see by turning to the passage; so that the true interpretation is, in which things or doctrines, not in which epistles, as if they were unfit for common use.

But what is still more directly to our purpose, observe—

* Luke xiii. 2—5. Is. xlv. 22. Ps. xciv. 7, 8. Gen. vi. 3.

† Rom. ii. 2—6.

3. That whatever abuse had been made of these doctrines, as we understand the text; or of these epistles, as others understand it, there is not a hint given about their being withdrawn even from the "unlearned and unstable." From his given premises the inspired apostle deduces no such inference; it is the insulting and insufferable impertinence of the Church of Rome that draws such a groundless and mischievous conclusion. Nothing could have been easier, had the thing been proper, than to have said, Let the pastors of the churches have these letters, but let not their flocks possess them; at any rate, keep them out of the reach of the unlearned and unstable. Instead of this, the apostle of Christ states the truth in all its extent, tells out, honestly and fearlessly, what had been the consequences to certain descriptions of persons who tampered with the doctrines of the sacred oracles; especially to those who had abused the long-suffering of our Lord: still he makes no mention of depriving them of these oracles; no, not even in this passage which is oftener in the mouths of Romanists than all others, with the view of establishing their detestable doctrine, that the word of life should be kept from the people. But take the passage either as it stands, or turn it and twist it in any way you please, and try if by any sort of fair reasoning you can come to the conclusion, that it discountenances the free unfettered circulation of the Scriptures. Your effort fails, and no wonder; because the language warrants no inference of the kind. But the absence of proof presents no obstacle in the way of the Church of Rome, whose expositions, however indefensible, are quite imperative. Were she to take the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and tell her members that these words teach the impropriety and danger of furnishing the laity with the Scriptures, they, poor people, have no choice but to receive this exposition as the true one. They must do so, or abandon her communion. The apostle says that they that are unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction; therefore, according to her reasoning, the Scriptures are to be withheld from this class of persons; yea, and from all others except to whom she pleases—an assumption well becoming the quarter from

which it emanates. Try this species of argument by another experiment. Many destroy themselves by an abuse of the good creatures of God; therefore, these good creatures must be taken from them. If this be right reasoning, where does it apply? The divine procedure agrees not with it. You see the bounty of God, nevertheless of this abuse, extending itself to all; "for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

4. A great deal has been said about the term "unlearned." It has been most unjustly and unmercifully applied to all, or almost all, except to the priests and dignitaries of the Church of Rome. The people have been spoken of, times without number, in the most degrading terms;—in terms that, but for the vassalage in which they are held, it is impossible they could endure for a single day. Whenever this subject is introduced, the words "dogs, swine, giddy, profane," and such like, are very commonly met with in their own writings, in reference to the people. Now the term "unlearned"* which the apostle uses here, does not so much as allude to persons unskilled in the various branches of literature: it means persons who are *unteachable* and *obstinate*, or *rude* and *inexperienced*, or *selfish* and *headstrong*; and hence refuse to receive instruction. In one word, he alludes to those who love the darkness rather than the light, and who will not take advantage of the light after it has come to them.

While on this subject, I think it proper to assure those who are taught to look upon us with an evil eye, that Protestants, while they claim a right to think and judge for themselves, do not despise instruction, or deny the use of teachers whose opportunities and advantages may fit them for expounding the Scriptures, and, whose time being wholly devoted to the work of the ministry, may thus be the better qualified to bring things new and old out of their treasure for the spiritual benefit of God's household. But this takes from none the right of private judgment. In so far as their teachers inculcate what is in accordance with the word

* ἀμαθεῖς

of truth, they are bound to believe what they say; not because *they* say it, but because God has said it; and it is both their privilege and their duty to have constant recourse to this divine standard, that they may be satisfied it is the word of God they hear.* This, we affirm, is no less their privilege than their duty; and should they hear any thing advanced not in harmony with the oracles of truth, they are to reject that, were even an angel from heaven to publish it.† Protestants are far from despising learning. Every branch of education that can be turned as a handmaid to serve, in any shape, the common cause, is to be prized; and if their instructors be not pious only, but learned also, they are taught to value both their piety and erudition; but not to the abridging, far less to the exclusion, of their own private right to judge of the doctrine by God's rule. No man may attempt to rob them of this. It is what they will never part with; and so far will any right-hearted teacher be from demanding of them a reception of all he says, simply on his authority, that the more narrowly they examine the Scriptures to see whether these things be so, he will rejoice the more. He knows well, that it is only in so far as the mind of the Spirit is declared, and no farther, that he either acts in character, or may expect his ministrations to be blest; and, that it is just in proportion as his people receive, love, and practise the truth, that they derive benefit through his instrumentality. While, therefore, it is his business to preach what God commands him, it is also his joy to know that the people of his charge have access to that very book out of which he instructs, reproves, exhorts, and comforts them.‡

But all this is far from being congenial with the spirit and practice of the Church of Rome. During what are called the dark ages, and even so late as the fourteenth century, the priests were in the habit, not merely of withholding the Scriptures from the people, but "of substituting fables, the chronicles of the world, and stories from the battle of Troy, in the place of the gospel." This you may think an extraordinary state-

* See Acts xvii. 11. † Gal. i. 6—9. ‡ 2. Tim. iii. 16, 17.

ment, and so it is; but you will find it fully substantiated in a work of great interest which has been lately published.* It is a startling fact, and I should be glad were it to lead many to investigate the matter for themselves. In this whole discussion there is but one cause to advocate—the cause of truth. Alas! as we advance in our inquiry, greater abominations come into view. The people never had a welcome to the book of God from the Church of Rome. Her doctrine on this point is, “That to permit the indiscriminate reading of the Scriptures, is a thing that will do more harm than good: that the Scriptures read without note or comment is poison: that none shall have liberty to read the Scriptures but those who receive a licence from the bishop, or some other person in office; and whoever shall presume without permission to read or possess such Bibles (meaning her own translation) may not receive the ablution of his sins till he has returned them to the ordinary.” With this doctrine her practice is quite consistent.

After a translation of the Scriptures was given to the people by Wickliffe and Luther, the Romish clergy exerted themselves to the utmost to keep the volume from the people. To give it to the laity was in their eyes a crime of very great magnitude: all who ventured to do so had to endure whatever persecution they could bring upon them. For more than a thousand years the *whole* services of the Church of Rome were gone through in an unknown tongue; so that whether it were the Bible, or Cæsar’s Commentaries, or Ovid’s Metamorphoses, it was all one to the poor laity who understood not a word that was uttered. All that was said was spoken “into the air;” and those who thus addressed them in mockery, were barbarians unto them.†

Although at an early period portions of the Word of God were translated into the vulgar tongue; yet these translations were considered rather as private property, and excited no noise. It is also to be remembered that before the discovery of the art of printing it was no easy matter to multiply rapidly entire copies of the

* Vaughan’s Life and Opinions of John de Wickliffe, D. D.
† See 1 Cor. xiv. 6—19.

Scriptures. The writer of Constantine’s Life informs us, that one of the first and most princely acts of that Emperor, was to order “fifty church books, fairly written in parchment, to be provided at his expense, for the churches in Constantinople, containing those parts of Scripture which are most useful and profitable to the church, and most portable. And *two imperial waggons* were appointed for their conveyance.”*

It is the history of the ages that follow which lays open to us the hostility of the Church of Rome to the Scriptures. As her wickedness, covetousness, superstition, and domination increased, the oracles of light and truth became the more abhorrent to her sight. She struggled with violence to bury them in oblivion, and to keep all in total ignorance of their contents. The time at length arrived when God came out of his place to rebuke her iniquity, and to make it manifest that he would no longer endure her base treatment of his own word. One instrument after another was raised up, whose single and united efforts were crowned with astonishing effects. Then her dire antipathy at the Scriptures became matter of public notoriety. Thus, when that godly veteran, Wickliffe, who lived in the fourteenth century, not only produced, by much close and long-continued labour, a translation of the whole Bible, but also sent it forth to the world at large, the thunders of the Vatican were heard afar, prohibiting the Word of God from appearing in a language which the common people understood.† A bull was issued from head quarters against Wickliffe’s translation, as containing damnable heresies. The translation of the Bible by Tindal shared a similar fate; so did Luther’s. These things were ominous of overthrow to the man of sin;

* Thomson and Orme’s Historical Sketch of the Translation and Circulation of the Scriptures, p. 16.

† “The New Testament was finished about the year 1367, and before 1381, he had also completed the Old Testament. Before this translation appeared, the Word of God was scarcely to be found in this country, in a language which the people could understand; but though copies must have multiplied slowly, such was the avidity of the people to read the Scriptures in their own tongue, that it was very generally circulated through England.”—*Ibid.* p. 34.

they were plain indications of danger at hand; matters were proceeding to a much greater length than a Popish conclave could think of tolerating—a cruel and protracted persecution ensued—every thing that human artifice and cruelty could do, was done to stop the circulation of the Word of life.

With regard to Wickliffe's Bible, it was not thought enough to burn as many copies of it as could by any means be collected: "It was decreed that his writings should be banished from schools, halls, hospitals, and every place whatsoever, and that no man shall hereafter translate any text of Scripture into English upon his own authority, and that all attempting such a translation, or reading them, shall be punished as favouring error and heresy." It was farther enacted against any who persisted to act against this law, that they should be openly burnt to death in the sight of all the people, for a terror to others, in order to root out the heresy from the realm. And thirty years after Wickliffe's death it was verily decreed, in the council of Constance, "That his memory should be pronounced infamous; and that his bones, if to be distinguished from those of the faithful, should be removed from the consecrated ground in which they were deposited, and cast upon a dung-hill. Tradition and history report, that in pursuance of this sentence his remains were taken from their place, reduced to ashes, and thrown into the river which still passes through the town of Lutterworth." *

From this time laws without number were issued, bribes upon bribes were given, and every effort made to prevent the Word of God from coming abroad. To the See of Rome there is nothing under the sun so horrible as the Bible. Wherever it gains an entrance, it is considered, and justly too, as the sure forerunner of absolute desolation to her ecclesiastical power; the removal of which is the certain annihilation of that church. Give the Bible to the people, tell them to read it for themselves, and look up to God for understanding to comprehend its important meaning. They will soon see the Church of Rome spoken of in that book, but spoken

of only as antichrist, and the mother of abominations. Tell them, then, to submit as they were wont to their former instructors, the priests and bishops. If the advice be not viewed as the language of irony, it must be reckoned as absurd and barbarous. Hence the deep-rooted hatred in this quarter to the Bible; hence the doctrine that it is a dangerous book to be put into the hands of the people; and, hence too, that insult, "With or without notes, it is impossible to make the Bible a safe book for the illiterate poor." Shocking profanity! the meaning of which is, that the book which God in mercy has given to the world, is the most mischievous and dangerous that was ever published. To deny the authenticity of the Scriptures altogether, is really not so bad as to deal with them in this fashion. Professed infidels are not slow to declare that, were they but convinced of the divine origin of the Scriptures, they would respect them accordingly. They acknowledge not this, and treat them as a forgery and imposition. But here is a church pretending to believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and affirming that it is a revelation from God to man; yet, with the forehead of a harlot, stands forth and declares to all who will lend an ear to her licentious language; "But you must hear me before you hear God. You must believe what he says, only as I choose to explain that to you."

The Scriptures contain words addressed by the God of salvation to every creature under heaven without limitation or restraint. They are his invaluable gift to the family of man; but this proud and haughty church starts forward and impudently asserts, "That none ought to have the Scriptures in their possession but whom she permits." Mark well the language! She speaks of "*permitting*" the Scriptures to be read, and does not in all cases "*permit*" them to be read; yea, that it is a very condescending thing in her when she does "*permit*" the Scriptures be read: that is, she will *permit* Jehovah to speak to his own creatures when it suits her, and when it is against her interests she will not *permit* him to speak to his own creatures. What deep condescension! what consummate wisdom! what unparalleled concern for immortal souls in the Church of Rome! She will not give the Scriptures but to those

* Wickliffe's Life, vol. ii. p. 381.

whom she deems fit to receive them. In her estimation ; and who has not heard of her infallibility ? who knows not that she is the Holy Mother Church ?—yet in her estimation, he who gave the Bible is too liberal, too profuse in the bestowment of this favour, and she will condescend to take the whole management of this affair out of his hand into her own. Never, O never, were such fraud and infamous arrogancy palmed on the human race ! Were it not for the existence of the very dotage of superstition, it is impossible that people possessed of common sense should be so easily cheated out of their most precious privileges and liberties by the glaring falsehoods, and monstrous absurdities of a corrupt church.

The whole of this robbery is rendered the more odious by its being committed under the mask of kindness. The keeping of the Scriptures from the people is professedly an act of charity, and a true specimen it furnishes of the tender mercy of that Church. One of her bishops, Watson, said to a poor man, in the days of Queen Mary, who was pleading hard for a New Testament that he had taken from him :—“ No ; we will use you as we use the child ; for, if the child will hurt himself with the knife, we will take away the knife from him. So, because you will damn your soul with the Bible, you shall not have it.”* Had it been merely to show you the spite of an individual, the specimen now mentioned would not have been produced. It presents before you nothing more than a just description of the spirit of the Church of Rome ; for, in her own articles, which she has published to the world, she scruples not to affirm “ that the Scriptures do more harm than good.”† Well might a pious author exclaim, when alluding to this article : “ Woe to priests, woe to bishops, woe to prelates ; yea, woe be to them indeed ! They have not only taken away the key of knowledge, but they reproach it to be the key of heresy.”

* Morning Exercises, p. 134.

† “ Cum experimento manifestum sit, si sacra Biblia vulgari lingua passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde, ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti, quàm utilitatis oriri,” etc.—De Libris Prohibitis, Regula IV.

Were it possible for us at this moment to gain a hearing from Papists, we should reason with them somewhat in the following manner :—Who gives the sun for a light by day ? Nothing can be more profuse than his cheering beams ; they are scattered everywhere. Did ever God say to any creature, you may restrain these rays, or shed them abroad where and when you please ? Would it not be the very madness of presumption for any one to pretend that this power was delegated to him ? Such a person you would consider unfit to be reasoned with, and would leave him to enjoy his delirium ; but the presumption in the one case is not greater than in the other. Fearlessly draw your conclusion, and act like men.

It must not, however, be allowed to pass without notice, that, wherever Papists mingle with Protestants, they would fain conceal the fact, and grudge no pains to make it be believed that their Church never withheld the Bible from the people. Some of them may do this through mere ignorance, trusting to the bare assertion of their guides ; but others must know of the various and often-repeated Bulls that have been issued by the head of the Church of Rome, prohibiting, at the risk of the heaviest censures, “ lords and marquisses, booksellers, and specially the illiterate poor,” from possessing the Scriptures. No translation of them was made by that Church till long after the Reformation. Her services must all be gone through in an unknown tongue, which is equivalent to the prohibition of the books read, whatever these may be. And even when, from the progress and results of the Reformation, she was forced to allow a translation of her own—it made its appearance in the most forbidding shape—accompanied with mischievous notes and burdensome commentaries, so securely guarded, that those who are still but “ permitted” to possess the Scriptures, must, if they continued in her communion, never once think for themselves in the perusal of them ; but take the sense and meaning of every word according to the wisdom of the Holy Mother Church displayed in said notes and commentaries. By this means she still maintained the mastery over all her votaries. It was still her voice, not what the Spirit saith, they were to listen to. Her

interpretations must be received as the rule, however opposed to the law and the testimony. Nothing can be more certain or evident, than that the Bible is the unflinching enemy of Popery. It is accounted and dealt with as such by the Romish Church, nevertheless of all her fulsome pretensions of reverence for it. It was found at the Reformation that those who read the Scriptures abandoned her communion. It will ever be found so; and hence, by every means she can devise, their circulation will be discountenanced. "Shall old men," asks Peresius, "before they have put off the filth of their mind, and young men that yet speak like children, be admitted to read the Scriptures? I suppose, verily (and my opinion fails me not), this ordinance," the reading of the Scriptures, "under the pretence of piety, was invented by the devil." *

I am aware that an opinion prevails among Protestants of the present day, that, although these things were true three or four hundred years ago, the asperities are now worn off, and Popery is changed to the better. It is all a mistake. Popery can never change. It must be destroyed. The only remedy the world has to look for, is not an improvement in the system, but its utter extinction. If you lose sight of this, you run into error; you are betrayed. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

It is not much above one hundred years ago, that a translation of the Scriptures appeared in France, accompanied with notes. The tidings reached Rome; and, not long after, the pope and his bishops caused a book to be printed and published, pointing out the errors of this Bible, and the commentaries accompanying it. To decide any thing as to the merits or defects of the translation or the commentaries is not our present business. What we have to do is to ascertain what the pope and his cardinals decided concerning the reading and translation of the Scriptures. After prefacing their work with a mighty show of kindness, faithfulness, zeal

* Morning Exercises, p. 179.

for souls, and so forth, they proceed to state the errors of said book in a hundred and one separate "Propositions"; each Proposition containing some sentiment found in the translation or notes, which they condemn. And what, my friends, do you suppose some of these egregious errors to be? You shall hear:—

"LXXX. The reading of the Holy Scripture is for all men.

"LXXXI. The holy obscurity of the Word of God is not a sufficient reason for the laity to excuse themselves from the reading thereof.

"LXXXII. Christians are to sanctify the Lord's day with reading goodly books, more particularly the Holy Scriptures; 'tis dangerous to deprive them of them.

"LXXXIV. To pull the New Testament out of the hands of Christians, or in keeping it close and sealed up, by taking away from them the means of understanding it, is to shut the mouth of Christ against them."

These are a few of the condemned "Propositions;" but as the document is not in every one's hand, and especially as there are Protestants who need some information on this point, I shall quote from the end of the work a paragraph or two in which the settled judgment and determination of the Church of Rome are declared concerning it.

"Having, therefore, as well heard by word of mouth, as received in writing, the suffrages of the aforesaid cardinals and other divines; and having first implored the assistance of the Divine light, by private and even public prayers appointed to that end; we do respectively, by this our ordinance, which shall perpetually stand in force, declare, condemn, and disallow, all and singular, the above inserted propositions, as false, captious, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, scandalous, pernicious, rash, injurious to the Church and its practice; not only outrageous against the Church, but even against the secular power, seditious, impious, blasphemous, suspected of heresy, and savouring of heresy itself; as also encouraging heretics and heresies, and even schism, erroneous, often condemned, and, lastly, also heretical; containing divers heresies manifestly tending to innovation, and principally which are found in the famous Propositions of *Jansenius*, nay, even as taken in that sense in which these were condemned.

"We command, then, all Christ's faithful people, of both sexes, that they do not presume to think, teach, or preach, touching the said propositions, otherwise than is contained in this our same ordinance: so that whosoever teaches, maintains, or publishes them, or any of them, jointly or separately, or even

treats of them by way of disputation, publicly or privately, unless, perhaps, to impugn or disprove them, shall be, *ipso facto*," by the act itself, "without any other deliberation, liable to the ecclesiastical censures, and to other penalties appointed by law against those that commit the like offences.

* * * * *

"We, therefore, by the apostolical authority, and the tenour of these presents, do again prohibit, and likewise condemn, the same book, inasmuch as, by soft words and benedictions (as the Apostle expresses it), that is to say, under the false pretence of a pious instruction, it is exceedingly suited to seduce the minds of the innocent; whether it bears the above mentioned titles or any other, of whatsoever edition or version it may be, wheresoever and in whatsoever language it is hitherto printed, or (which God forbid) may be printed for the time to come.

"Moreover, we enjoin our venerable Brothers, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries of places, as also the Inquisitors of heretical tenets, absolutely to restrain and compel any persons whatsoever that contradict or are rebellious, by the aforesaid censures and penalties, and other remedies of law and fact, calling in, for this purpose, the secular power, if it be needful, to their assistance.

"No man, then, shall be allowed to infringe, or, by rash enterprise, contravene, these pages of our declaration, condemnation, mandate, prohibition, and interdiction. But if any presume to attempt it, let him know that he shall incur the high displeasure of Almighty God, and of *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, his Apostles.

"*Given at Rome, in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in the year of our LORD's incarnation 1713, the 8th day of September, in the 13th year of our Pontificate.*"*

The short way with Papists to get over such things is to call them all falsehoods, and insist upon it that they are broad and arrant lies; but truth is no coward, nor shrinks from investigation. What you have just heard is taken word for word, not from a Protestant, but from a *Popish* publication. Nothing more is necessary to show that the Church of Rome, at the above date, was an avowed adversary to the circulation of the Scriptures.

But a hundred years is a long period, and so many changes have taken place, even recently, that some are

still in danger of supposing that Popery is not what it was. Come, then, to our own age, and see what these boasted changes have produced. Various Bulls and letters, within the last twenty years, have been issued by the Roman pontiff against *all* versions of the Bible in the vulgar tongue. In 1816, the Archbishop of Mechlin was severely reprimanded by the pope, because he had presumed to exhort his people to procure the Scriptures for themselves, commanding him to remember the Council of Trent, in which it was decided, that to give the Bible, in the vulgar tongue, to all indiscriminately, would do more injury than benefit. In the same year a Bull was issued, addressed to the Primate of Poland, in which it was unhesitatingly declared that, by the circulation of the Scriptures, the very foundations of religion are undermined, and that every measure was to be adopted to remedy and abolish this pestilence, as far as possible.* In 1819, the prelates in Ireland received a letter from the pope, imperiously demanding of them to prohibit all the children of their flocks from going to any school where the Bible was read. They are exhorted to take heed to this, "in the name of the bowels of mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." These documents may be seen in various periodical works published during the years 1816 and 1819.

To come still nearer the present day: one of their own bishops, in a production dated in the year 1824, declares, that it would have been a mighty blessing to England had the Bible been still chained to the pulpit, as Henry VIII. caused it to be. His words are: "Had the chain with which Henry VIII. tied the Bible to the preaching desk in England never been broken, that country would not have witnessed the scenes which her history records, and she might this day be the most free and happy nation on the earth, reposing in the bosom of the Catholic Church."† This same very Rev. Gentleman, no less a dignitary than the learned and reverend Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, "publicly lauded as a meritorious deed the sacrilegious

* The Constitution Unigenitus.

* Prot. vol. I. p. 262.

† Letters on the State of Education in Ireland, &c. p. 28.

destruction of the Book of God." I request you not to believe so serious a charge at second hand; but you cannot doubt his own testimony. "I heard," says he,* "of a poor man in the county of Kildare, who, if I gave him a Bible approved of by the church, would venerate it more than any thing he possessed, but having been favoured by the lady of his master with one of the societies' Bibles, without note or comment, accepted of it with all the reverence which the fear of losing his situation inspired; but, behold! when the night closed, and all danger of detection was removed, he, lest he should be infected with heresy exhaled from the Protestant Bible during his sleep, took it with a tongs, for he would not defile his touch with it, and buried it in a grave which he had prepared for it in his garden!! Should a pious old lady of the society ever read this anecdote, the hair of her head will start up, the frightful figure of Popery pass before her eyes, and she will rehearse devoutly the prayer of the gunpowder plot. Yet I who have read portions of the Bible every day, these twenty years and upwards; who have devoted many an hour to the study of it; who have often explained it to others; who have collected sixteen or eighteen editions of it in different languages; who, like Augustin, find in it infinitely more beyond my comprehension than I can understand; I, who am thus a very Bible man, do admire the orthodoxy of this Kildare peasant—nay, I admire it greatly; and should I happen to meet him, I shall reward him for his zeal." Mighty man! in strutting to the peasant what a lordly reward thy bountiful hand would deign to confer!†

Were I to begin to select from the annual reports of the Hibernian Society, and such-like kindred institutions, that give specimens of the determined opposition of the priests to the circulation of the Scriptures—were I

* Letters on the State of Education in Ireland, &c. pp. 39, 40.

† Dr. D. died on the 14th June, 1834. "It is strongly reported and generally believed," says the *London Patriot*, "that for some months past, his religious opinions had approximated to evangelical truth.—It is said, that he would not for some days previously to his decease, permit the approach of any of the priests."—*London Patriot*, June 25, 1834.

to mention the well authenticated anecdotes there recorded of their destroying the Scriptures, and of the influence they use, even by threats of the most terrible excommunication, in order to prevent old and young from having a Bible in their possession—it would occupy far more time than we can spare. Besides, these reports are quite accessible to all who choose to peruse them. Take, however, one example in proof of the influence of the priests over their people in connexion with their opposition to the Word of God. In September, 1828, two ministers, one from Scotland and another in Ireland, received from the Edinburgh Bible Society a number of Bibles to circulate among the poor in that dark island; but they found the greatest difficulty in getting Papists to receive them. In most cases they were absolutely refused, lest they should incur the displeasure of their "Ghostly Guides." One of them affirms, "That these priests are the greatest curse to that unhappy country; that they use every effort in their power to keep the people in gross ignorance, and to lead them blind-fold to perdition; and, that their opposition to the circulation of the Bible is at present violent."*

I shall close this mournful detail with an instance of a similar description which is of very recent date. The following extract from a letter, of date December 4, 1833, written by Mr. James Walker, Bellefield, Shinnone, and addressed to his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, shows how matters stand to the present time:

"MY LORD,—Some days since, within the last fortnight, a poor family in this parish, of the name of M'Gennis, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, was thrown into deep sorrow by the painful illness of a young girl who had suffered lingeringly, and at length gave signs of approaching dissolution. I am not about to pain your Grace's ears by the recital of officious interference on the part of the ministers of any rival church—for the girl was attended, I suppose, duly, and by the priests of her own communion; but one of them, named M'Mahon, a few days previous to her decease, had learned that the solace of her bed of languishing was derived from a forbidden source; in fact, that the Bible, God's Word, was not only in her

* Edinburgh Christian Instructor for January, 1829.

wretched hut, but had been applied to by the sufferer as a refuge in her distress. The book had been conferred upon her at a former period, at a public examination, for proficiency at the minister's free-school. With the zeal of his church, the priest demanded and learned the astounding fact, that a poor member of his church dared to seek other reliance than wafers, beads, and holy oil. He, therefore, instantly commanded the destruction of the Holy Book. The dying girl shuddered—the aged parent deprecated; but the priest was inexorable—the book must be burned, and that in his presence. The poor father declared the work should not be done under his roof. The incensed priest then rushed from the hut (they remaining resolutely reluctant) and brought forth the Bible into the open air, placed it upon a coal of turf, and deliberately consumed it in the face of God's open day, upon the high road, within the witness of numbers who attest the awful fact! The poor girl is removed from all her troubles here, but the other actors of the scene remain, some to glory in, some to deplore, this new shame done upon our misnamed island of saints.”*

It was customary in the days of persecution to burn heretics with their Bibles about their necks, who suffered the most cruel deaths for no other offence than daring to read what God had commanded them. Believe it, my friends, the cursed system and persecuting spirit of Popery are the same to this day. The Bible is as much hated as ever, and as much dreaded. Where Protestants bear the sway, and Popish dignitaries proceed not to harsh measures, it is simply because they dare not. The character given of the late pope, in the public Journals that announced his death, is strictly correct, and applies to every grade in that church, from the pontiff down to the village priest: “He bore the character of a meek-spirited man,—willing enough, indeed, to assert the prerogatives of the head of the Catholic Church, but yielding whenever his pretensions were firmly resisted.” They resemble the adulterer to whom the dawning of the morning is as the shadow of death; but let darkness set in, and they are as rampant as lions, and as ferocious as tigers of the forest. They will tear from the people the Word of God, and destroy it to the utmost of their power. They have their wealth by

a craft which it condemns; yea, it exposes their deceit, denounces their doctrines, and brings life and immortality to light, to all who will listen to its sacred contents. “Let us pray,” says one, “that God would blast Popery; that God would preserve us from it. If it should for our gospel sins prevail, you must lose your Bibles, perhaps your bodies too, unless you will adventure to lose the truth and your souls: assure yourselves they have waded through the blood of men to destroy the Word of God, and will do so still; their strongest arguments are swords and stakes.”

Having stated the hostility of the Church of Rome to the circulation of the Scriptures, I shall now prove that, from the period in which there was a written record in the world, it became common property; that, instead of belonging exclusively to a favoured class, it was the gift of God to the people. Let us to the law and the testimony; what say the Scriptures?

That the law was first given to the children of Israel as a nation, there can be no doubt. God himself, in addressing this people from Sinai, said: “Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.”

When in any age God raised up prophets, they were not to peep and mutter to a favoured few; he sent them to the people to proclaim aloud the messages he had put into their mouths: “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sins.” “Thus said the Lord unto me, Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates.” “Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the gates; she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.”* In

* Christian Guardian, December 27, 1833.

* Is. lviii. 1. Jer. xvii. 19, 20. Prov. viii. 1—5.

all this there is nothing like restraint or prohibition: no expression indicative of fear that the Word of the Lord would do harm, if made publicly known.

The same thing presents itself to view when you open the New Testament. Jesus, John, and the disciples of Jesus, preached to all who would hear them. They cast forth the seed of the kingdom upon every kind of soil. One prominent feature in Christ's ministry was, not withholding the gospel from the poor, but preaching it to them. Before leaving the world to go to the Father, he said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."* They did what they could to execute his commission. In addressing that vast concourse of people who came together on the day of Pentecost, "Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call."† Nor were their labours confined to any one spot: "They went forth, and preached every where."‡ Should it be objected to the above examples, that they refer to words *spoken* not *written*, the objection would be extremely frivolous; for, surely, there can be no more danger in Christ's words being read, than in the same words being spoken.

Again, when the apostles wrote their epistles, and sent them to the different quarters to which they intended them, they charged those to whom they were sent to read them publicly: "When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea." "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."§ The mere insinuation that Paul's epistolary correspondence differed from his speech, met from him its merited rebuke. "His letters (say they) *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contempti-

* Mark xvi. 15.
† Acts ii. 38, 39.

‡ Mark xvi. 20.
§ Col. iv. 16. 1 Thes. v. 27.

ble. Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present."* The apostles had but one gospel to preach; and, when they corresponded by letter, their writings contained that gospel. When they addressed their fellow-men on the great salvation, they did so from the house-tops, in the most public manner; and their letters, although addressed to the Churches, were to be read in the open assembly.

Nor was this a new thing in the earth. It was at once in harmony with the will of God, and with the practice of his people from the time the world was furnished with a revelation. Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people." And this was not an unmeaning service: for the people understood what he read to them, and replied: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."† Joshua did the same thing as his predecessor: "He read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."‡ One cannot help wondering how it is possible for any who ever read or heard of such a passage, to be gulled out of their rights by the chicanery of designing priests.

In the days of Josiah, as soon as the book of the law was found, "The king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant *which* was found in the house of the Lord."§ In the book of Nehemiah we find Ezra adopting the same plan; likewise Baruch, at the command of the prophet Jeremiah, read "the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people." It was, in truth, a thing not

* 2 Cor. x. 10, 11.
† Ex. xxiv. 7.

‡ Jos. viii. 34, 35.
§ 2 Kings xxiii. 1, 2.

left to the choice of the priests to attend to, or neglect, as they might deem expedient. The command was peremptory:—"When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." *

We are, afterwards, frequently informed that the law and the prophets were read in the synagogues of the Jews every Sabbath-day. Jesus countenanced the practice; and he was in the habit of putting the question, "Have ye not read?" But that people were not merely commanded to lay up the words of God in their hearts, and teach them diligently to their children; they were even to write them upon their door-posts, and upon their gates;†—an injunction that could ill answer the purpose of concealment. This was to make the Word of God as open as day; so it was intended. It more than implied that there was no call for secrecy, nor danger arising from unrestricted exposure.

They had also, at that time, what Christ has promised his Church in all ages, pastors and teachers to expound the Scriptures; but this lessened not the value of the written record, nor in the bestowment of the former blessing did God ever intend to supersede the latter. Ever keep sight of the important fact, "That the Bible ever has been, and ever will be, God's witness between the speaker and the hearer,"—a fact which distinctly includes the people's right and the people's duty both to possess and to search the Scriptures for themselves. The very design of speech and of writing is to express thought. It is, therefore, not a little strange that uninspired men should suppose that men inspired by the Holy Spirit either could not, or would not, express them-

* Deut. xxxi. 11—13.

† Deut. xi. 18—20.

selves so as to be clearly understood by those whom they addressed, or by men at large for whose benefit their writings were given, preserved, and circulated.

I enlarge not; for enough has been said to show that the Bible is a free gift from God to the world, and that the Church of Rome is an enemy to the Bible. The prerogative she claims, to give it only to whom she deems proper, is presumptuous in the extreme. And brief as the preceding statement is, I doubt not you are satisfied of its truth, and trust it will be blest for keeping you further aloof from a system so hostile to the holy record of heaven which testifies of Jesus the Saviour.

The next subject we shall enter upon, is that wonder of wonders in the Romish Church, Transubstantiation. But we must not part without a word of improvement on the topic we have just discussed. Observe, then,

1. That the religion of the Church of Rome is borrowed from heathenism and not the Bible. You have read of heathen mythology, or heard of it, and of the favoured few who were initiated into the secrets of its abominations; and of the uninitiated, who were forbidden to approach to, or meddle with, such sacred things. Just so has that Church acted with the Book of God, so far as her power could extend, or her thunderbolts be hurled. The causes of this hostility are very obvious. The book whose origin is divine never prophesies good concerning her, but always evil; and whenever this book is read and pondered, people forsake her communion. It is not that dark book her priests and bishops pretend; otherwise the "ribald multitude" would not so quickly perceive from it that the system of Popery meets only condemnation there.

2. The scheme is got up to suit the evil propensities of our nature. This remark presses itself upon us, whatever part of the system is surveyed. Man is a creature naturally averse to that which is good. The Word of God warns, reproves, rebukes, and threatens him on account of sin. It is a constant troubler to the rebellious; because it will enter into no terms, nor submit to a single concession, in order to foster the most beloved lust, or retain the most profitable sin. If dear as a right eye, and useful as a right hand in the estimation of the transgressor, the only voice heard there is,

Pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand. If the unrenewed repent and believe the gospel, it brings glad tidings of great joy; but if they continue obstinate, its awful messages are, "Woe unto the wicked!" "The wicked shall be turned into hell." "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil." While sin bears the sway, and men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, such tidings can never be agreeable. In order to preparation for a blessed immortality, this holy book demands the eradication of every evil principle; but the unholy Church of Rome fosters wickedness, and speaks peace to every one that will demean himself to hold fellowship with her. Let her tenets be embraced, and it matters not what treatment the commandments of Christ receive.

3. Let Protestants learn to prize more highly than they have done the Word of the living God. They are not plagued with a set of men who grudge them its possession, and who, wherever they can do so with safety, dissuade their people from reading the Scriptures; yet there are those among Protestants who have both undisturbed access to the Bible and are entreated to peruse it, but who allow days and weeks to pass over them without opening the book of God. There are too many who never open it with the serious design of discovering what God says to them there. I fear the question may with justice be put to some among ourselves; "Is there any volume almost so utterly neglected as the Bible, though numbers who disregard its instruction, very inconsistently acknowledge it to be the only infallible guide to eternal happiness?" Let such as are thus guilty awake from their lethargy, lest poor deluded Papists rise up in judgment against them; let them awake in good earnest, lest, by their prolonged sloth, they provoke the God of the Bible to take away the heavenly treasure from them. Would any of you be quite prepared to meet such a catastrophe?—upon the demand of an inquisitor, would you in quietness surrender to him your Bibles? and, however much you may have hitherto despised and neglected them, would you cheerfully bid them farewell at his request? Oh awake, and prize your Bibles, lest some destroying angel should

be commissioned to rid you of a boon whose value you knew not, nor thought of, although privileged for many years with an uninterrupted loan! And should your own welfare fail to arouse you, will you have no pity on your children? Will you still remain unconcerned amidst frowning events, and listlessly disregard the threatenings of offended Deity?—As far as our limited influence extends, we raise again the friendly warning, and entreat most urgently all heads of families to search the Scriptures, and to see that all within their gates be made acquainted with the revelation of mercy. Had we access to every teacher in every seminary in the land, our earnest admonition would be—Make all your pupils familiar with the book of God, and cause them to read in it every day. We have no scruple as to the propriety of using other collections; let the rising race have every advantage; but let it never be forgotten that God's collection is the best—there is none like it. The Bible is incomparably the best school-book in the world, as it is the best family-book, and the best church-book. Its claims are of the highest order; they are divine, and let none any longer resist them. Let Protestants, at least, show that they esteem the book of God, and love it with all their hearts. Let them show and not be ashamed to acknowledge that, of all the treasures they possess, their Bible is the most precious, and of all the privileges they are favoured with, this is the chief—unshackled liberty to consult the oracles of God. Amen.

LECTURE III.

ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

THE greater the utility of a divine ordinance, the more strenuous will the adversary's efforts become to propagate erroneous opinions concerning it. If he succeeds in spreading these, the original design of the appointment will be henceforth lost sight of; the abiding impressions it was intended to make will be erased, and its proper fruit fail to be produced.

When you contemplate the ordinance of the Lord's supper, you easily perceive that the benefits arising from its due observance, must, to the Church of Christ, be great, numerous, and lasting. Many have been the enemy's endeavours to turn this blessed appointment into a curse. At an early period, even while yet the apostles were alive, it was, at least, in one instance, grievously abused. By coming to the Lord's table in an improper manner, the members of the church at Corinth brought down upon themselves the heavy accusation of an inspired apostle, and the visible marks of Divine displeasure. They came together, professedly, to obey the Saviour's dying command; but such was their disorder, and so far had they erred from its original simplicity, that, in referring to the ceremony they attended to, Paul plainly declared to them, "This is not to eat the Lord's supper." I have alluded to this ordinance, before entering on the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation, on two accounts: *first*, because the advocates of this strange doctrine believe, or profess to believe, that they are eating the Lord's supper in receiving what they call the "Sacrament" from the priest; and, *secondly*, because we maintain that the said ceremony has not the most distant relation to the ordinance of Christ.

Hitherto we have stood, as it were, at the threshold of this temple of idols. We have been occupied in viewing the ground-work and exterior parts of the building; but we must now enter and examine for ourselves that collection of heterogeneous monsters which have presumptuously and blasphemously assumed the names of the doctrines, ordinances, and offices of the holy Catholic Church. When a person is introduced for the first time into an apartment full of curiosities, he stands for a while at a loss to know what to think—his ideas are vague and undefined; but after having indulged himself in a general survey, his eye fixes on some figure more odd, inviting, or conspicuous, than the rest. He then deliberately approaches that object with the view of taking a close and full survey. Feelings akin to these pervade the mind, when the door of this temple of idols is thrown open. There is a difficulty in determining on which of all the grotesque figures one ought to fix on for immediate investigation. By and by the eye of the explorer settles on the most prominent and extraordinary image in the group, which has placarded on its broad front a name of uncommon length, and of startling import—TRANSUBSTANTIATION. It is before this idol of the Papists that we now place ourselves, not to pay adoration, but to see what is here exhibited, and to hear what can be heard concerning it. I wish the whole examination could be carried on with propriety in allegorical language; but this would raise the cry of injustice on the one hand, and of dissatisfaction on the other; therefore, I shall proceed to state in plain terms, *What is meant by Transubstantiation, Whence it took its rise, The purpose it serves, And its opposition to all the reason and senses of man, as well as to all the revelation of God.*

In order to understand *what is meant by Transubstantiation*, we must hear the language of that church from which only the doctrine emanates, and to which exclusively the ceremony belongs. The Council of Trent, whose authority no Papist ever disputes, decreed concerning this matter: “Since Christ our Redeemer has said that that was truly his own body, which he offered under the appearance of bread; it has, therefore, been always believed in the Church of God, and it is now again declared by this holy council—that, by the conse-

cration of bread and wine, there is effected a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood: which conversion is fitly and properly termed, by the holy Catholic Church, Transubstantiation.

“If any one shall deny that, in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there are contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ; or, say that he is in it only as a sign, or figure, or by his influence; let him be accursed.

“If any one shall say that, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny the wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into his body, and the whole substance of wine into his blood, the appearances only of bread and wine remaining; which conversion the Catholic Church, most properly terms Transubstantiation; let him be accursed.

“If any one shall deny that, in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, a separation being made, the whole Christ is contained in each element or species, in the separate parts of each element or species; let him be accursed.”*

The following questions and answers are quoted from a Popish Catechism in use at the present day, the title of which is the “Catholic Christian Instructed”:—

“*Ques.*—What is the faith of the Catholic Church concerning the Eucharist?

“*Ans.*—That the bread and wine are changed by the consecration into the body and blood of Christ.

“*Ques.*—Is it then the belief of the Church that Jesus Christ himself, true God, and true man, is truly, really, and substantially, present in the blessed sacrament?

“*Ans.*—It is, for where the body and blood of Christ are,

* “Quoniam autem Christus Redemptor noster, corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, verè esse dixit: ideo persuasum semper in Ecclesia Dei fuit, idque tunc denuò sancta hæc Synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiæ panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiæ vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus. Quæ conversio convenienter et propriè a sancta Catholica Ecclesia Transubstantiatio est appellata.”

“Si quis negaverit,” etc.—Concil. Trid. Sess. XIII. See also Fletcher’s Lectures, p. 143.

there his soul also and his divinity must needs be—and, consequently, there must be whole Christ, God, and man; there is no taking him in pieces.

“*Ques.*—Is that which they receive in this sacrament the same body as that which was born of the blessed virgin, and which suffered for us upon the cross?

“*Ans.*—It is the same body, for Christ never had but one body: the only difference is, that then his body was mortal and passable; it is now immortal and impassable.”

A little further on, in the same Catechism, it is asserted that it would not avail us “to feed upon dead flesh separately from the soul and divinity.” It is not only the body, but the *living* body; yea, the *whole* body, and *whole* soul and divinity of Christ, that every member of the Church of Rome professes to swallow in taking the Eucharist.

In “the Litany of the blessed Sacrament,” you find, among others, the following prayer:—“*Jesus*, our wonderful God, who for us vouchsafest to subject thy Almighty self to the power of man, and immediately descend upon our altars, when the priest pronounces the words of consecration, *have mercy on us.*”

Much more might be quoted from the books that record the sentiments of that church upon this doctrine; but enough has been advanced from such a source. You see what the dogma contains, and every member of the Church of Rome believes it to the present time. We have not entered on a point concerning which there is any dispute. It is an article in the creed of every adherent to Popery.

By the consecration of bread and wine is meant the words which our Lord uttered when he took the bread and the cup, and gave both to his disciples, saying; “This is my body—this is my blood.” These words are uttered by the priest in Latin—their being repeated by another person would produce no miraculous change. It is *his* mumbling these Latin terms that transubstantiates. Before he repeats them, the bread or wafer, made of water and flour, is really and confessedly nothing but bread; and the wine and water in the cup is really and confessedly nothing more than wine and water; but immediately after the words of consecration are pronounced by the said priest, and he has done with

saying, “This is my body,”* the water and flour are no longer bread as they were the preceding moment, but are now turned in reality into the very body and blood, soul and divinity, of the Lord Jesus Christ: so it is with the wine and water. And every person who denies that this change has taken place is a heretic, and lies under the heaviest anathemas of the Church of Rome.

Should one of her members be attending to the above statement, he must know it is correct; but, Oh, how is it that he cannot perceive the palpable, the absolute impossibility of such a change being wrought! What can prevent him, if he will but once think as a man, from ridding himself of a yoke so grievous and degrading to human nature! Could we persuade him of our friendship, and that it is his best well-being we have at heart, we would on the knees of importunity implore him to abandon a system so full of error, and whose only aim is to delude and destroy. We would put to him the question which the veteran Wickliffe with stern solemnity put long ago, when disputing on this topic; “May the thing made turn again, and make him who made it?—Thou, then, that art an earthly man, by what reason mayest thou say that thou makest thy Maker?” We would still tarry and request him to ponder in earnest what he professes to believe: “That although he sees nothing but bread in the Eucharist, eats nothing but bread, tastes nothing but bread, and though the Scripture assures him that it is but bread; yet he says, there is nothing of bread there, but only the appearance of it.”† How can this be?

But whatever absurdities there may be in the doctrine, it is impossible to be a Papist without receiving it as a whole, and embracing it as the truth of heaven. It is the test of his being a true son of the Church; and should he question the reality of it, or hesitate about embracing it as part of his creed, all that remains is to brand him for a heretic, and treat him as one accursed of God. If he will not be credulous enough to believe that, by the pleasure of a poor sinful man like

* “Hoc est corpus meum.”

† Benedict Pictet’s True and False Religion Examined, p. 141.

himself, a little flour and water are turned into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no salvation for him.

In every recorded instance of a real miracle, a *visible* change took place upon the person or thing that was the subject of the miracle. In the very nature of the thing, a miracle is that which obviously exceeds human power; is that which, when seen, is seen without controversy, to be the operation not of feeble man, but of Almighty God. In the case we are contemplating, these plain axioms go for nothing. After the words of consecration, as well as before, the water and flour remain bread; no visible alteration takes place. Its *accidents*, as they call them—a scholastic term which signifies the qualities or properties of a thing, such as its colour or shape, its whiteness, roundness, hardness, and such like—its *accidents* continue as formerly without alteration. If white before, the bread is white still; but then, if you believe the doctrine of Transubstantiation, there is no bread now; its accidents remain, but its substance is gone. The words of consecration being uttered, the bread is annihilated, and in its stead there are placed the body, soul, and divinity of Christ. Yea, every crumb of bread, however small, and every drop of wine separated from the whole, is turned into a new and entirely different substance; is transubstantiated into a whole Christ in his humanity and divinity; so that, in partaking of this ordinance, every Romanist professes to eat, or swallow, the very body and blood of Christ—not in semblance, or spiritually, but in the grossest and most corporeal manner you can think of. The bread and the cup, are not, in his estimation, an emblem or symbol of the body and blood of Christ, but are indeed his very identical body and blood, soul and divinity. This is his belief, however odious, hideous, and impossible faith in the doctrine may seem to others.

I shall now furnish you with a *short history of the rise of Transubstantiation*. In so far as the Church of God is concerned, there it never could be received; the error is too glaring to gain credence, or obtain shelter among the enlightened and redeemed. The ancient fathers were set against it. It was not always ad-

mitted even by the Church of Rome. The very earliest mention of it is at least five hundred years after the ascension of Christ. For three hundred years more, it was only occasionally spoken of, and received but by few. In taking a second look at the gorgeous figure before you, you may easily suppose it reached not this tremendous bulk in a day. After Constantine assumed the external administration of the Church, and formed its government on the model of civil government, grievous errors began to be propagated. Among others, the Lord's supper was, after this, "sometimes administered at the tombs of the martyrs, where their souls were by many believed to be present, as the ancient Greeks and Romans imagined the spirits of their heroes to hover around their graves. Hence arose masses for the dead. Before distribution, the elements were elevated to be contemplated with respect, and this at last degenerated into adoration of the symbols."*

When the dispute concerning the doctrine at length commenced, the high authorities of the Romish Church condemned the idea of the real presence as absurd and heretical. The pope himself of that day did so. Afterwards it was taken up by synods, and met with any thing but a cordial reception—one approved, another disapproved. "According to *Popish* writers, it was about eight hundred years after Christ, before *any author* wrote seriously and copiously about the real presence." But it met not with general reception for a long period, even after this. In the eleventh century, great opposition was made to it both in France and Germany; so that it was at least three hundred years after it was publicly talked of, before Transubstantiation grew up to its present size and shape—before it reached the climax of its monstrous perfection. The tenth century was the most ignorant age; during it there was little stir abroad, and this topic was allowed to remain undisturbed. It might then be generally received, but it was not an article of faith. According to all impartial historians, the tenth century may be justly styled the age in which

* Blair's History, vol. I. p. 49.

darkness, superstition, and barbarism reigned. Even "the clergy of the Romish Church were degraded to the lowest pitch by their ignorance, indolence, and gross immorality."

About the middle of the eleventh century, the debate concerning the real presence was roused afresh, and the arguments of those who condemned it were appreciated by many, especially in France. It was about the period we are now speaking of that men's faith in the scriptural account of the Lord's supper began to be tried; for by the cruel edicts of the Romish councils, the flames of persecution were kindled, and burnt fiercely against all who would not receive the doctrine of the church concerning Transubstantiation. But while these edicts manifested the progress of the error, and the determination to shut the mouths of those who opposed it—the name itself was not coined till the twelfth century. Stephen, bishop of Autun, fell upon the word. As yet all were not satisfied; some still denied the corporeal presence, and were punished for doing so. Vigorous efforts were made to quash resistance, and, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, Transubstantiation was, by the decrees of the church, to be universally received. To their credit be it told, the people in England, especially the people in Scotland, were among the very last to submit to the dogma. They, however, yielded also, and for about a hundred and fifty years were deluded like their neighbours on the Continent. It was no easy matter to work, and mould, and frame this doctrine of destruction into its present shape. The mere reading of the books which record the process of abomination, severely tasks the patience of the inquirer.*

The above brief account, taken from various sources, shows that Transubstantiation is not so ancient a tenet as the Church of Rome would have the world believe; nor has it at any time been so universally received as she asserts. But in order to discover her fraud and falsehood, it should be known to all, that, in the dark

* Wickliffe's Life, vol. II.—Popery, a Novelty.—Protestant, vol. II.—Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, &c. &c.

ages when this doctrine was canonized, she expunged, as far as possible, every sentence from every ancient author she could lay her hands upon, who wrote in a scriptural manner about the Lord's supper. No book bearing on this point was permitted to go abroad until it passed through the ordeal of, what was called, the Index Expurgatorius, by which every sentence which bore against this monstrous doctrine was blotted out. Our Popish neighbours may not be disposed to believe their church capable of such baseness, but history establishes it, and there are to this day in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, some original specimens of this trickery, which are exhibited as great curiosities.* Hence, what may appear very puzzling to those not aware of such a fact, you find Popish and Protestant writers both quoting the same fathers to prove the very opposite doctrines. To give you an example: The Popish doctors refer to Augustin as an early father who maintained the doctrine of Transubstantiation. "This holy father and great doctor," they say, "speaks thus of Christ, He was carried in his own hands, when giving his own very body, he said, This is my body." Now the language of this ancient writer, although it may not be strictly correct, yet conveys a very different idea when fully expressed as he left it: "He carried himself in his own hands, *in some sort*, when he said, This is my body." In passing through the ordeal we have referred to, the words, "in some sort," were blotted out, which erasure alters the sense completely; and so in countless instances of the kind. This shows how little credit can be placed to what they affirm concerning the sentiments of ancient authors.† The truth is, that while for more than a thousand years after our Lord's ascension there were various views entertained

* Protestant, vol. II. p. 116.

† We need not wonder at the above statement; for still, when it can be done, they resort to something of the kind. In the *Edinburgh Courant*, Feb. 20, 1834, an advertisement appeared for a magnificent oratorio, in behalf of the Roman Catholic Edinburgh School. Among others who were to patronize the said oratorio, the name of the Lord Provost was found. This gentleman changed his mind, "withdrew his name, and required it should not appear

regarding the Lord's supper; for the most part, every one was left to judge for himself concerning it. It was not until the darkness had settled down to midnight that the advocates of the strange theory of the real presence, prevailed in their efforts. And even in the darkest times it was keenly resisted by men of sterling piety and good sense, who adhered, at all hazards, to the primitive idea of the ordinance. The Albigenes and others, continued to reject Transubstantiation as a novelty, and ruinous idolatry.

While all Papists are agreed as to the real presence in the Eucharist, they are by no means agreed among themselves upon what they ought to *found* the doctrine. Some go to the Scriptures for proof; some say it can be established only by tradition; and others maintain that the thing cannot be proved either from Scripture or tradition, but the church, which is infallible, has enacted it into a law, and therefore it must be true. It is forced upon the credulous by the mention of all these authorities together; and to the easy faith of the dark ages nothing was difficult to believe which was sanctioned by the Church. Besides, to her rebellious children there was no quarter;—they have abandoned the faith—bind them to the stake. Her manner from her youth has been arbitrary, and, regarding human life, unceremonious. Many, we might say myriads, did afterwards in this and other countries suffer for no other reason, than because they doubted the truth of Transubstantiation. From the time in which it became a law, the strictest prohibition was laid upon the people never to call the truth of it in question. Doubts on this subject could no longer be borne, and those who entertained them were soon and certainly got out of the way. It is this which accounts for its prevalency in ages when ignorance prevailed among the people, and iniquity abounded to an awful extent among the dignitaries

in future advertisements." Neither it did; but a shift was fallen upon to answer, if possible, the same purpose as if the name of the Lord Provost had still been among the list of patrons. In future advertisements, names were omitted altogether, and intimation was given, that the Oratorio was "under the distinguished patronage announced in former advertisements and in the bills."

of the Church of Rome. The crimes with which the popes and their bishops are charged, even by their own writers, are of such a nature as can scarcely be mentioned between man and man; to state them in an open assembly were an insult not to be endured. Their tyranny, avarice, and sensuality, have no parallel in the history of the world; what is still worse, all these were practised under the mask of piety.*

Having considered the origin and advancement of this tenet, I proceed to state to you the *purpose it serves*. In this there is neither difficulty nor mystery. The short answer is,—It elevates the priesthood, and degrades the people. To the last moment of their adherence to the oppressive system of Popery, they must bow their necks, their backs, and their consciences, to every petty priest, or pedant bishop, who chooses to lord it over them. They must receive all he says for truth, for divine truth, however contrary to sense, to reason, and to Scripture. Nor wonder at this, after the doctrine under consideration is credited. A people who can believe that a sinful man can at his pleasure turn a little water and flour into the real humanity and divinity of the Lord Jesus, will believe any thing which that man

* "One of the most lively descriptions of the state of the times, we have met with, is in the sermons of some ecclesiastics at the council of Siena in Tuscany, which met about 1420; the chief thing intended by the council was the reformation of the clergy. The necessity, therefore, of this reformation was the chief subject of all the discourses preached on that occasion. The first sermon was from Luke xxi. 25. '*There shall be signs in the sun;*' which the preacher applies to the church militant, understanding by the sun, the church, and by the signs or spots, the vices of the ecclesiastics. 'And, as it is better, says he, to suffer for truth, than obtain a living by flattery, I shall discover all the spots that have eclipsed the brightness of this sun.' He declares 'that the clergy *by an entire depravity of manners have declined righteousness through all the cases of declension;*' and he concludes his discourse by drawing the following character of the priests:—'Priests are, now, usurers, innkeepers, merchants, pedlars, governors of castles, stewards, notaries, gamblers, pimps;—in a word, there is no profession they do not follow, *excepting that of the hangman.*' In the next discourse, the preacher is no less severe upon the bishops: 'They far surpass, says he, *Epicurus himself in debauchery,*' &c.—*Thomson and Orme's Historical Sketch*, p. 24.

chooses to advance. Should he say that snow is black, they must of course believe it—the priest has said so. It matters not that every other person believes the snow to be white; the priest says it is black, and so say they. It is not of the least consequence that the testimony of their own sense is opposed to the priest's assertion; they must not consult their own impression; the snow must be black, because he has said so. Let none think we are trifling with the subject on the one hand, or going too far with it on the other. It was a true report one gave of Popery, a townsman of your own, who, by the mercy of God, was led to see its errors, and who lived and died in the faith of the gospel: "I found," he said, "if I must be Papist, I must submit first to be blindfolded, and then be led wherever they pleased."

The authority of such impostors over those who give them credit for what they pretend to, is absolute. The man who believes that what he smells, and handles, and even sees, yea, and tastes, to be bread, is, after all, not bread, but the whole humanity and divinity of the Son of God, I should like to know what that absurdity is which such a man will not believe, should his presuming priest but request him to give it credence. He cannot present before him a greater impossibility than he has done. Should he tell him that the wafer, small as it is, contains every particle of flour, and every drop of water, on the face of the earth—true! it must be true, for the priest has said it. Or, let him tell him that his own body and soul are turned into a wafer—he will not contradict what his priest has affirmed; O no! this would never do—he has said it, and the thing is done. In vain would you expostulate with him—Why, neighbour, a wafer has not eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and flesh and bones, as you have. He might not be able to reply rationally, but the poor man has no alternative; the priest has said so, and it must be so. He turns a wafer into man, and into God, at his pleasure; and he may, when he likes, turn me into a wafer. He has pronounced some Latin words over me, and said, I am not now a man but a wafer, and I am transubstantiated. It would not tell the weight of a straw upon his reasoning faculties, or sensibilities, to inform him that there existed positive and obvious proof to the contrary; that,

let the priest say what he chose, he assuredly was a man and not a wafer:—'tis all in vain to argue or attempt to convince—his miracle-working priest has said so, and so it must be—let the contest drop. To you and others the thing may appear worse than a fairy dream, but the member of the Church of Rome must receive it as the truth of God. In no book of fictitious absurdities did you ever read of any thing half so absurd as Transubstantiation. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or the wonders of Little Red Riding Hood, are nothing compared with this. He who believes in Transubstantiation degrades himself far below the worshipper of the sun. The wild barbarian who prostrates himself before a piece of wood, an insect, or an onion, is not half so debased in his idolatry, nor so gross an idolater, as he who takes his god in his mouth and eats him up.

Well has the doctrine been styled "Satan's masterpiece in Popery." Wickliffe calls it "the offspring of Satan," and, in speaking of the real presence, introduces this arch-enemy of souls as thus reasoning with himself: "Should I once so far beguile the faithful of the church by the aid of antichrist, my vicegerent, as to persuade them to deny that this sacrament is bread, and to induce them to regard it as merely an accident; there will be nothing then which I will not bring them to receive, since there can be nothing more opposite to the Scriptures, or to common discernment. Let the life of a prelate be what it may; let him be guilty of luxury, simony, or murder, the people may be led to believe that he is really no such man—nay, they may then be persuaded to admit that the pope is infallible, at least with respect to the matters of Christian faith; and that, in as much as he is known by the name of Most Holy Father, he is of course free from sin."* Thus far the reasoning of Satan, and how awfully it has been verified, the history of the last eight hundred years can testify. Wherever he succeeds in establishing this absurdity, the ordinance of Christ ceases to be of any use, and direct idolatry follows. Henceforth, too, the whole credibility of the gospel vanishes; for if this change be

* Wickliffe's Life, vol. II. p. 130.

wrought, who can believe the miracles recorded in the Scriptures? rather, of what use can it be to any one to believe them at all? Here the testimony of the senses is destroyed, by which alone, in the first place, the proof of the truth of miracles can be tried and confirmed. But whatever may become of truth, this much it effects, it gives the priests an entire and unwarrantable sway over the purses and over the minds of their deceived adherents, who “believe the bread to be converted into God, and as such worship it with divine honour.” Well might Neale, the historian, assert, “That the principles of the Romish religion are such as no man can receive, till he has abjured his senses, renounced his reason, and put off all the tender compassions of human nature.”

After receiving the sacrament, it is a common expression with a Papist: “I have received my Maker to-day.” The person employed in great churches to carry the sacrament, is called the person who carries God, or “the carrier of God.”* When the priest elevates the bread, after it has been consecrated, the people bow their heads, fall down and worship, giving it the same reverence, and calling it by the same names, as they would Christ himself. They address the wafer thus:—“Living bread that didst descend from heaven, have mercy upon us. God hidden, and my Saviour, have mercy upon us. Word made flesh and dwelling among us, have mercy upon us.” These things are mentioned at present, not to prove the idolatry of which they are guilty who speak in this manner to a wafer, but the unbounded sway of Popish priests over those whom they can persuade to have faith in such nonsense. It is verily to believe that the priest is vested with omnipotence. Hear, my friends, the purpose, the announced purpose, of his being put into the office he holds: “He is set apart to the priest’s office that he may make and consecrate the body of God.” Little are many aware of the haughtiness and extravagant presumption indulged in by a Romish priest, and as little do they dream of the complete subjection in which the people are held who yield to his boundless, though unfounded, claims.

* Protestant, vol. II. p. 32.

In the Church of Rome, the Eucharist is dispensed thrice a year; but, except at Christmas, there are few who communicate, unless young persons, or those who have been restored anew to fellowship. But what is called *Mass*, is said every Sabbath day, when a wafer, and wine and water, are consecrated, which the priest only partakes of. During this ceremony the people are all on their knees. After consecration he holds up the bread, then the cup—the bell rings to teach the ignorant what is going on—they lift up their eyes *to see their Saviour*. This is denominated the daily sacrifice, and is believed to be a repetition of the very sacrifice which Christ made when he died upon the cross. It is called the sacrifice of the Mass, and to be absent from it is a mortal sin; although to this day the service is gone through in an unknown tongue. They must be there, even should they not know a word that is spoken. In this case, as in the Eucharist, the bread and wine are pretended to be turned into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Christ; and for this reason I have alluded to it. Nor does the nauseous mummary end even here; for if a Papist is sick, the priest takes a wafer, turns it into the body of God, and straightway goes to the sick person to administer it to him. “Any day,” says a Scotch bishop of the seventeenth century, “any day the Creator may be created, for any Papist, for twelve pence!! twelve pence is the price of a Mass!!” “The saying of masses,” another tells us, “keeps more priests of the Church of Rome in pay, than any prince in Christendom can maintain soldiers. It has raised more money to them than the richest exchequer of the world was ever owner of.”

At no time, however, are the people permitted to partake of both kinds. The cup is uniformly withheld from them for the following reasons: Because “it would be lost on the long beards of the laity; because of the danger of spilling the blood of Christ, which could hardly be avoided, if all were to receive the cup; because, considering how soon wine decays, the sacrament could not well be kept for the sick in both kinds; because some constitutions can neither endure the taste nor the smell of wine;” it seems no priests are ever trysted with such squeamish constitutions; but

further, "because true wine in some countries is very hard to be met with. In fine, in opposition to those heretics that deny that Christ is received whole and entire under either kind."*

To offer you any thing like serious arguments against these barefaced impositions, would be worse than useless. Suffice it to say, they afford just another specimen of Popish falsehoods. They have not the slightest foundation in experience, reason, or Scripture. Some have found great fault with the priests for taking all the wine to themselves and withholding it from the people; but the pity rather is, that they take not all the wafers also. The people would sustain no loss by their doing so. The blessed Jesus says, indeed, in speaking of the cup, "Drink ye all of it;" and, were you to view the Romish ceremony as the Lord's Supper, of course there would be something in it very wrong; but it is not so, and let the priest take the whole. His wafer is three times the size of theirs, and were he to eat theirs as well as his own, it would free them from a species of crime they have sometimes been accused of, and fix the charge where it is more justly due—upon him who professes to turn bread into the living body and blood of Christ. It is only the wildest hordes of the human family that eat the flesh of men. The deed excites horror in every civilized country; but Popish priests, by their own showing, eat real living flesh and blood once every week, and make their people do so once in the year.

The figurative language our Lord makes use of in the sixth of John, has been referred to in vindication of their doctrine; but it requires only to look at the passage in connection with the explanation given by Jesus himself, to be convinced that there is no allusion whatever even to the Lord's Supper in that chapter, and far less to that carnal kind of eating which the Popish priests have introduced. The words of our Redeemer there recorded are of intense interest, and the emblems of bread and flesh have their spiritual and only proper

interpretation annexed to them: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." Knowing that some did not understand him, and that others were offended at the doctrine, he drops the figure entirely, and tells them plainly what he meant: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit and *they* are life." What countenance the Romish doctrine receives from this, judge ye.

The foregoing remarks render it unnecessary to detain you long in proving that Transubstantiation is *opposed to the senses and reason of man, and to the word of God*. While we may not agree with all the sayings and doings of the pious reformer, Knox, yet, upon this subject, his reasoning is acute, and his conclusions irresistible. I know not how I can better illustrate this particular than by quoting his language, and I do this the rather, as the part of his works from which it is taken is not, I believe, generally known.* After making some observations on the idols of the heathen, and on the language of the prophet Isaiah to idolaters, he remarks, in reference to Transubstantiation: "The wheat is sown and nourished in the earth; the rain, dew, and heat, bring it to maturity. The reaper cutteth it down; the cart or sledge, drawn by horse or some other beast, draweth it to the barn or the barn-yard. The tasker, or the foot of the ox, treadeth it out. The fan delivereth it from the chaff. The miller and the millstones, by the help of wind or water, maketh it to be meal. The smith maketh the irons that give to that god his length and breadth, likeness and form. The substance of that god is neither wood, gold, nor silver, but water and meal made in the manner of dough. And then the workmen must take good heed to their hand; for if the fire be too hot, that god's skin must be

* Bell. de Euch. b. 4. c. 24.—The Grounds of Catholic Doctrine, &c. p. 31.

* Prologue concerning the Mass.

burnt, or, if the irons be foul, his face must be blackened. If, in making the roundness, the ring be broken, then must another of his fellows receive that honour to be made a god, and the crazed miserable cake, that once was in the hope of being made a god, must be given to a baby to play withal. And yet is not all the danger past; for if there be not an anointed priest to play his part, all the former artificers have lost their labour, for without him that god cannot be made; yea, if he have not intention to consecrate, the fashioned god remaineth bread, and the blinded people commit idolatry. The poor god of bread is the most miserable of all idols; for according to their matter (of wood, or stone, &c.) they will remain without corruption many years; but within one year that god will putrefy, and then he must be burnt. They can abide the vehemence of the wind, frost, rain, or snow; but the wind will blow that god to the sea; the rain or snow will make it dough again; yea, what is most to be feared, that god is a prey (if he be not well kept) to rats and mice."

In this manner Mr. Knox treats the subject, and after saying more to the same effect, he adds: "If any think that I ought not to mock what the world has so long holden in veneration, I answer, that not only I, but also all the godly, ought not only to mock, but also to curse and detest whatsoever is not God, and yet usurpeth the name, power, and honour of God; and also, that we ought to mock, gainsay, and abhor all religion obtruded on the people without assurance of God and his word, having neither respect to antiquity, to multitude, to authority, nor estimation of them that mean the same. Who then can justly be offended against me or any other, when by all means we let the blind world see the vanity of that idol? considering that by it hath the glory of God been more obscured than ever it was by any idol in the earth; for to none was ever absolutely given the name, nature, power, and honour of God, but to that idol alone."

But who can fully describe the blasphemy of that detestable doctrine, or enumerate the evils and absurdities it introduces and fosters. "If, through excess, any one who is a laic shall vomit the Eucharist, he shall repent forty days; if the same thing shall happen

to one of the clergy, seventy days of repentance are allotted for him; bishops, ninety days. If the thing happened through infirmity, seven days are prescribed."* Papists are not ashamed to say that, if vermin eat the consecrated host, they therewith eat the body of Christ. In their Ritual it is provided, "That, if rats or worms do eat the body of Christ, they must be burned, because their senses took it only for bread."

They call their Eucharist a mystery; but it materially differs from all Scripture mysteries. These may be above the comprehension of reason, but *it* opposes reason entirely. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh." Here is a deep mystery—a mystery of love, wisdom, and condescension unfathomable, unparalleled, infinite—a mystery, the faith of which is necessary to eternal life. But what is there here repugnant to reason? All right reason acknowledges its inferiority, prostrates itself in holy acquiescence, and is lost in amazement at the display of God's love to a lost world. In this so called mystery of Transubstantiation, reason is insulted. To be told that, at the same moment of time, the very same body is given entire to a thousand individuals in as many different places—it will not believe at all—to present it as a matter of faith to any rational creature, is an open outrage. Before the least credit can be given to such a thing, one must believe to be true what he believes to be impossible. Examine all the miracles one by one, and all the mysteries contained in the Word of God, you will meet with nothing like this. We can easily believe that when Aaron, at the divine command, stretched out his hand upon the waters of Egypt, a miracle followed—the waters became blood; but had it been added that that same Aaron, in that same moment of time, stretched out that very same hand upon the waters of Jordan, of the Euphrates, of the Thames,

* "Si quis per ebrietatem vel voracitatem Eucharistiam evomerit, xl. diebus pœniteat, si laicus est: clerici, vel monachi, seu diaconi, et Presbyteri, lxx. diebus pœniteant: Episcopi, xc. Si pro infirmitatis causa evomuerint, septem diebus pœniteant." *Decretorum tertia pars*, p. 2583.

of the Wolga, besides a thousand other rivers and streams flowing at the different extremities of the earth, who, I pray you, could believe it? We can easily believe the miracle of Jonah being swallowed up of a fish: God had prepared it, and God preserved his servant the prophet, by miracle, alive in the belly of the fish for three days; but, had it been added, that that very Jonah, during those three days in which he was in the belly of the fish which God had prepared for him, was also in the bellies of a thousand other fishes;—the same Jonah, swallowed up by a thousand different fishes at the same time, remaining whole and entire in each for three days, and at the end of three days the thousand different fishes vomit each an entire Jonah upon the shore, and, after all, there is but one Jonah. Blessed be the Lord God, he proposes nothing of such a nature for our credence. Constituted as we are, it is impossible we could believe it.

They call the Eucharist a miracle, but truly there is nothing in the world miraculous about it, if you except the presumption of the lying priest, and the credulity of the deceived people. The thing is just as it was—neither God nor man, nor flesh nor blood—nothing more than water and flour, after the consecration as before. Miracle there is none, nor the shadow of a miracle; every thing remains as it was. When the first plague was sent upon Pharoah, how would that haughty monarch have lorded it over Moses and Aaron, had the waters retained their former colour and taste, and produced the same effects after the miracle was professed to be wrought as before? Or, when Jesus turned the water into wine, had there been no visible change wrought upon it, how would the governor of the feast, and others with him, have rejected the tale with indignation, and spurned at the request to believe it wine, although it retained the colour and taste of water? Once more: Would the grief of Mary and Martha have been assuaged, had Jesus himself told them that their brother was really restored to life, although then and afterwards no symptoms of restoration to life appeared? This would have but mocked them, and plunged them in still deeper agony. The truth is, wherever there is nothing seen, heard, or felt alto-

gether above human power, none are requested by God to believe that a miracle is wrought. Where no visible superhuman change is produced, no one, were he an angel from heaven, may impose upon us to believe an evident falsehood. If any church on earth request such a thing, the only step that remains is to abandon her fellowship for ever, regardless alike of her cajolery and her curses.

I feel as if constrained, even though at a venture, to speak a word to the members of the Romish Church. Christ says, indeed, “This is my body,” when he took the bread and gave thanks. In the next place, in taking the cup, he says, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood.” You have been taught to understand the first literally, and your leaders labour to show that our Lord meant no representation but a reality. Strange, then!—in the very next sentence, they themselves are forced to acknowledge to you that Jesus used figurative language, and that his meaning is, not the cup, but the wine in the cup. Your Bibles furnish you with many such instances, which have the same claim to be taken literally as the instance mentioned. “The seven ears are seven years; the seven kine are seven years.” “The rock that followed them was Christ.” “I am the rose of Sharon.” “I am the bright and morning star.” “I am the door.” “I am the vine.” Many similar figures are used, by which every plain honest man understands nothing more than that they symbolize something else. He understands that the seven kine represented seven years; that the rock represented Christ, and so with the rest; and so likewise, when he says, “This is my body,” he meant nothing more than that the bread broken was to be in all ages *a symbol* or *representation* of his broken body. If convinced that this is the meaning, then follow up your convictions manfully; believe in him, and resort to his word for instruction; look up to him for guidance, and escape for your lives.

Before leaving this subject, permit me to impress one idea upon your minds—*Transubstantiation is a doctrine fraught with mischief*. It is calculated to increase infidelity, mislead the unwary, prejudice the enemies of the cross against the Saviour, and to make those who profess it bitter enemies to their fellow-men. It has

done more to keep the Jews from the true Messiah than any other stumbling-block that has fallen in their way in modern times. These are strong assertions, but I shall illustrate them to your satisfaction, by what has actually taken place, and by the statements of those who have narrowly examined the matter.

In Paris, the Jesuits once converted a young Russian, a member of the Greek Church, to the Romish faith. He being initiated, there were great rejoicings upon the occasion, and the Jesuits some time after called him before some of the nobility to catechise him, who being asked, How many gods are there? answered, There is none; for I ate him on Easter Sunday. This anecdote is well known; but some may not be aware who they are that claim the telling of it—two infidels—Voltaire and Hume—a fine story, indeed, in the mouths of such men. Were Transubstantiation a doctrine of the Bible, how would it tell against the Christian religion?

The following is of more recent date, and is extracted from the first volume of Dr. Granville's Travels to St. Petersburg, a book lately published:—

“I cannot forbear,” says the traveller, “saying a word or two respecting the miraculous wafers which are shown in the church of St. Gudule, and the melo-dramatic history belonging to them, of which several illustrious tapestries, as beautiful as paintings, exist in the same Church. From these pictures it appears that, during the persecution of the Jews at Brussels, one of them, who was both rich and spiteful, wishing to insult the religion of Christ, induced one of his own creed, by means of a large sum of money, to commit the sacrilege of forcing open the tabernacle on the altar of St. Catherine's chapel, and steal from thence the consecrated wafers, used at the communion, to the amount of sixteen, among which there was one larger than the rest. These wafers he afterwards carried to his employer, who resided at Enghien, where, it is said, the Jew and his family passed their time in vomiting imprecations on these representatives of the real body of our Saviour, according to the Roman Catholic creed. Shortly after, the original perpetrator of this sacrilege was found murdered by some unknown person; upon which his widow, terrified at having in her possession so fearful a charge, carried forthwith the consecrated wafers to the Israelites of Brussels, who, like those of Enghien, amused themselves in scoffing and maltreating these innocent symbols of religion. Some of those fanatics carried

their hatred so far as to transfix them with their poignards to the table on which they lay scattered. This last act of barbarity was the signal of their punishment. The sacred wafers spirted warm blood! and the culprits fell senseless to the ground. This scene forms the subject of one of the pictures. To be brief, the wafers were consigned to the care of the parish priest of our Lady of the chapel—the guilty Jews were denounced, arrested, and thrown into dungeons, from whence, after a regular process, in which the theft as well as the miracle of the blood were duly attested, they were taken out, paraded about the streets, their flesh torn with hot pincers, and at last burnt alive. From that time every Jew was, by a decree of the Duke of Brabant, banished from the country.”

The account ends by informing us that some of these wafers are still preserved in the church of St. Gudule, “and are worshipped under the name of the miraculous wafers. They are contained in a very rich frame, fixed to a cross of gold, and are carried in solemn procession once a year through the principal streets of Brussels.”

Time would fail to mention the miracles which have been wrought, if you choose to credit Papists, by the consecrated wafers. Bees have made temples to them; oxen and asses have prostrated themselves when a priest has been passing them carrying the wafers to the sick. Enough—enumeration would but disgust. The above anecdote, however, shows what evils arise out of the doctrine of the real presence, and that wherever Popery prevails the persecuting and bloody spirit of that religion is the same. One of the ablest ministers of State spoke truth when he styled it, the other day, “*an intolerant religion*.” While advocating the cause of those who profess it, he seemed unable, after all, to approach the *system* without horror,—seemed to view it as a fiery flying serpent that can only be safely exhibited when closely caged in iron; and even thus caged, he seemed to tremble for the consequences, and augur any thing but peace.

The words of Bishop Secker, uttered not much above half a century ago, are not more affecting than we believe them to be strictly correct, although not applied *exclusively* to Transubstantiation: “The Church of Rome,” he says, “has every where broken through all laws, human and divine, to destroy the Protestant

religion. She has, indeed, omitted the exercise of her authority whenever she durst not exercise it, but all her claims she hath constantly kept up; and to this day she yearly excommunicates every prince in Christendom who shall refuse obedience to any of the constitutions of the pope's whatsoever. Were she to resume her ancient power in this land, she would soon resume her ancient fierceness.—No instance can be given that Popery ever spared Protestantism for any continuance after it was able safely to oppress it. But least of all will favour be shown to this country longer than necessity obliges. Think, then, all who believe the doctrines of the Reformation to be the truth of Christ; think, then, what a condition it will be either to profess and practise the falsehoods and impieties of which you are so thoroughly convinced, or to be driven from this and every other place of God's public worship into corners; nay, in a while to be dragged out thence also, and sacrificed to that mother of abominations which has been so long drunk with the blood of the saints."*

"Popery," says another able writer, "cannot change, and Papists never will change while they believe such principles. Though our Papists are quiet at present, there is no security that they will continue so, till they renounce Popery, and the jurisdiction of Rome. Popish priests are as strictly bound to instruct their pupils that there is no faith to be kept with heretics, and that the pope has a divine right to absolve them from all ties and obligations they may come under to Protestants, as they are bound to teach them Transubstantiation.—The malice of Popish priests is boundless, and they are inexorable towards those whom they conceive to be opponents to their absurd principles and opinions."†

A gentleman of sterling piety and of great research, Mr. M'Gavin, Glasgow, who has done his part to rid the world of this abominable nuisance, in 1819, when discussing the very subject we are now upon, says, "One of the worst features of modern Popery is, the

* Secker on Popery and on the Rebellion.

† Murray's Lectures on the Revelation.

affected liberality of Papists. Their fawning and flattery of their Protestant brethren, as they now condescend to call us, are infinitely more disgusting than their cursing and their wrath. The wolf is never so dangerous as when he appears in a sheep's coat. They know that they look upon Protestants as heretics accursed. They will not tell them so just now, though all their priests have sworn to it, and all the faithful must believe as their priests bid them. They speak in very mild language at present, because they want something which Protestants have in their power to deny them; but their soft words and fair speeches can deceive only the hearts of the simple. Their affected moderation is gross hypocrisy, while they carry under the cloak all the cursing and bitterness of their fathers against those who will not fall down and worship their Mass idol.—Those who shall live to witness Popish ascendancy in this country, will have a better understanding of this than my present readers have. The curses which have been accumulating for ages upon the heads of all who deny that the Mass is the propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, will break forth with dreadful fury upon all who shall refuse to bow the knee to the idol which the Church of Rome sets up. In the days of the Council of Trent, curses were not empty sounds. The Church of Rome boasts of being unchanged and unchangeable; and this is almost the only true thing she utters amidst her thousands of lies. She will, therefore, be what she was in the days of that council, whenever she has the opportunity and the power."* While in a free country among an intelligent people, the system of Popery never can prevail, it is a fact worthy of prominent observation, that you always find those most seriously alarmed at the system who are best acquainted with it.

I have alluded once to the sacrifice of the Mass, and do so again because of the affinity that exists between it and the doctrine we have been considering. They stand or fall together. Papists are made believe that

* Protestant, vol. II. pp. 94, 95.

the bread and wine, which are consecrated by the priest every Sabbath day, are not in appearance but in reality a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. The gestures, vestments, and words of the priest are all intended to be indicative of this. But in opening the New Testament, you find it asserted often and explicitly that Christ died but *once*, and that he, by his *one* offering *finished* the work which the Father gave him to do; therefore, he dieth NO MORE. According to the Popish creed, this sacrifice requires, even still, to be daily offered, which is doing what can be done to render the testimony of God void, and to ruin immortal souls.

But this sacrifice of the Mass is for the dead as well as for the living; so that "men may live in sin, and die in sin, and yet have the benefit of a propitiatory sacrifice to relieve them from the punishment they deserve! The church that teaches this, is guilty of the murder of all the souls that perish in the delusion." In receiving as truth the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacrifice of the divine Redeemer is rejected: they cannot both be true. How fearfully guilty are those men who wilfully and wittingly impose upon the credulity of the ignorant, and, as if it were a thing of nought, sport with the eternal interests of their fellow-men! Giving full allowance for the exercise of charity, can you suppose that a man, say a consecrated priest, removed one stage from insanity, *can believe in his heart* that the ceremony he goes through *really* accomplishes what he says it does? Oh, were it not that the people have given up to him what he has no right to possess, how easily would they see through the cheat, and emancipate themselves without delay!

But you have compassed this idol long enough: look around you and behold another conspicuous object. See you yonder triple-crowned head? It is the *Pope* of Rome to whom priests and people, bishops and cardinals, pay homage. His anathemas have made Europe tremble to her centre; that is *he* who exalts himself above all that is called God. In the next Lecture, your attention shall be directed to this great Popish idol. But what improvement shall we make of the present sub-

ject? I am addressing a Protestant audience,—a people whom I have often addressed, whom I love, and whose best welfare it has long been my desire to promote; to request them not to believe in Transubstantiation would be to offer them an insult which I trust I shall never be guilty of. Shall I then return to expatiate on a doctrine of such abhorrence? In giving utterance to my own feelings, I am persuaded I express yours also. I feel, having got through it, as if I were delivered from a pestilential atmosphere, and permitted to breathe freely the fresh and wholesome air of heaven. I feel as a person would who has just escaped from the darkness, dampness, and vermin of a horrid dungeon, to enjoy himself at liberty among his friends. But, in looking back, I check the utterance of unmingled gladness—there are left behind the votaries of Popery whom we fain would snatch like brands from the fire. Alas, alas, for them; may God pity them!—Popery is an awful curse—Satan's mightiest engine for accomplishing the ruin of souls, and venting his malice against the Friend and Saviour of men. Let me entreat you in leaving this place, to retire to your closets, and bless God for casting your lot in a Protestant country. Prize the distinguished privileges with which he has favoured you; prize a free and full, a present and an eternal salvation through the blood of the Lamb. There is one who will endeavour to prevent your engaging in such an exercise; your distinguished privileges but increase his eagerness to accomplish your destruction. He knows, were he to succeed, which may God forbid, your misery would be proportionate to the benefits bestowed and slighted. Yield not, my dear friends, to this destroyer. Let not the glorious gospel of the grace of God be preached to you in vain. Believe, each for himself, the record he has given of his Son; believe it upon his testimony, and apply for the gift, even eternal life through Jesus Christ. The sacrifice which he offered was complete. It answered all the demands of that justice we had offended, and of that law we had broken. He invites to a participation of the blessing; lend not a deaf ear to him who speaks to you from heaven; yield immediately to the gracious call; "Come unto me all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He will not refuse to receive you: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Believe it, he is the bread that came down from heaven; and believe his own explanation of this cheering intelligence; "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

To those of you who know the value of the Lord's Supper, who know what it is, in that holy and heavenly ordinance, to hold communion with the great Master of assemblies and his purchased ones—to you I would say, Prize the Lord's Supper more than ever you have done; bear in mind the breaking of his body and the pouring out of his blood which it represents; remember the coming of the Lord it sets before you, and watch for that appearing. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope unto the end. Never, by unseemly conduct, belie your profession; but endure all things, that you may "obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Show by your attendance upon his appointment, and your subsequent behaviour, that your faith in the Son of God is established. Bear always about with you the dying of the Lord Jesus, and, glorying in his cross, pursue your heaven-ward career; until, having reached its termination, you sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

And for those of another description, shall we ask them concerning their breach of solemn engagements? or, concerning their former life of disobedience?—no question of the kind is at present put; but we do tell such in good earnest, in the words of that holy book which reveals the mind of God, that except they repent they shall perish. Their danger is great and imminent. "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Men cannot slumber long in the lap of sin. The solemn thrilling message is uttered to us without respect of persons: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "To-day," then, "if ye will hear his voice,

harden not your hearts." They perished who did so of old; they must perish who do so still. God's hand will find out all his enemies: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Should any still refuse to tremble at the word of the Lord, a cup of trembling is about to be put into their hands—a cup mingled with this additional and bitter dreg, *the accusation of deluded Papists* who will rise in the judgment against such and condemn them. O be persuaded by the terrors of the Lord! "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

LECTURE IV.

ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

WHAT a giddy height this idol occupies ! How far aloft his crested front is borne !—down upon his fellows he looks with an air of contempt, as if they were nothing better than the dust of his footstool. Wonder not at the conspicuous place he holds. *It is the Pope of Rome*, whose supremacy is the nucleus of the whole system of Popery. While Transubstantiation is the test of that religion, the pope's supremacy is the chief pillar that sustains the fabric. This gone, the whole falls into confusion, and crumbles to ashes : nothing appears but one shapeless mouldering heap. The pope is the head of the church, the bond of its union ; break this, and link after link gives way, until the whole is disjoined and separated. When his power is gone, the system is at an end ;—but his pretensions are high, yea, supreme. Great as Transubstantiation may seem, it is far inferior to this god. “The pope is the master, the sacrament his servant.” When he has a journey to perform, he sometimes sends his sacrament before him, which is carried by a horse, with a bell tied to his neck, accompanied with all the vain and vile parade of a Roman court. The sacrament with its accompaniments tarries till the arrival of his Holiness, who disposes of what he is pleased to call “very God,” for great sums of money.

By the pope's adherents the consecrated wafer is believed to be “very God,” and is called by this name. But the pope is called God likewise, and it need not surprise you that he puts in a claim for superiority over that which his own hands have created. Beware, therefore, how you approach him. If you worship, he will

smile and promise you paradise—if you withhold adoration, he will frown, and rage, and threaten perdition. Think not that these are my sentiments without any authority granted from the pope himself. Boniface VIII. who occupied the papal chair about the end of the thirteenth century, made this an article of faith which is still in full force: “That to believe in the pope’s supremacy is necessary to salvation, and whosoever believeth it not cannot be saved.”*

But the pope’s power is not what it was. You may draw near and look at this huge grotesque figure without alarm. He is now far past the zenith of his glory, and his blustering anathemas vanish unheeded upon their announcement. He struggles to regain his former influence; but the effort is vain. It will be your fault if he ever aspire to what he was. For hundreds of years his glory has been on the wane, and still he must sink into deeper shades until impenetrable darkness envelops him, and his face ceases to be seen on the footstool of God. Even now he is waxen so powerless, that, except by guile and deceit, he dares not touch you with one of his little fingers. How is the mighty fallen! But though his strength is diminished, his pretensions are as high as ever. If you take into account a succession of popes, then this is he whom the angel described to Daniel: “He shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.” It is the same whom Paul speaks of: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”† I need hardly remind you that every pope calls himself the successor of Peter, who is intrusted by God with unlimited power over the church catholic, that is, the universal church—that he is Christ’s vicegerent on earth—acting in his stead, and invested with all his authority.

* Gavin’s Key, vol. II. p. 12.

† Dan. vii. 25. 2 Thes. ii. 4.

The word pope is one that signifies father, or papa, a word which only children use when speaking of, or to, a parent. Long before this term was claimed exclusively by the bishop of Rome, it was quite common in sending epistles to bishops in other places, to call them by the name of popes, or fathers. But at length when the power and ambition of the bishop of Rome waxed great, and he thought himself exalted above his compeers, he claimed the word pope as his own, applying it only to himself without permitting another to use it. From this word pope, or papa, came the words papal, papist, popery, popedom, and such like kindred terms—all bound up with, and subject to, the father, head, parent, or papa, of the system. I have used, and still do use the terms papist and popery, instead of catholic and catholic church, from no disrespectful intention towards those who profess the Romish faith; but simply because the word catholic is in no shape applicable to the system of popery which is opposed to Christ and his kingdom, and because the Romish Church never was, nor ever will be, the catholic or universal church. It is not yet two hundred years since the words, “Holy Catholic Church” were foisted in, in order to give greater eclat to the Church of Rome. Since then, a laborious endeavour has been made to get the words brought into common use; and, were the terms applicable, it must be allowed there is something inviting about them.

There are few passages of Scripture which Papists attempt to produce with the view of proving the pope’s supremacy. Before mentioning these, it may be proper, from authentic documents, to give you a brief account of the history of the bishops of Rome, and how they came to occupy that situation in which they have so daringly set at nought all authority, human and divine. The difference between the ancient humble pastor of the church at Rome and the modern Roman pontiff is prodigious. Sometimes the steps by which his power was increased are not easily traced, and at other times this is not difficult. The most satisfactory account I have read of this is contained in the first chapter of Wickliffe’s Life, entitled, “On the Rise and Character of the Papal Power.” It is the more valuable as the author takes his information mostly from Popish

works; and to this source I am indebted for various facts which I shall now state on this topic.

It is altogether unknown by whom the church of Christ was first planted at Rome. We know certainly that Paul wrote a long epistle "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints." It is equally certain from that epistle, that there were a goodly number of Christians there very eminent for piety. We know also that this same apostle was a good while a prisoner at Rome for the testimony of Christ. The latest account we have of him from the sacred historian leaves him there, "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Likewise from that prison the last of his inspired epistles issued, in which it appears that his end was near:—"For," says he, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."* But the apostle of the Gentiles was known to few comparatively in Rome; yea, so little was he known that he speaks of Onesiphorus as finding him out after long search: "When he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently, and found me." Rome at that time was not so properly the mistress among the nations, as the metropolis of the world. The population of that city alone was very great. The daily influx to it from all quarters was without a parallel. The whole amount of the Christian population formed a very small proportion to the heathens with which they were surrounded; but their profession, and their practice too, were strikingly different from those of their Pagan neighbours.

Soon after this the fall of the Roman empire commenced, and then, and during the ages of its decline, the followers of the Lamb had to endure, with brief intervals, one cruel persecution after another, not only at Rome, but in all quarters to which the Roman influence extended. While these trying seasons lasted, the power of God was displayed in rapidly increasing the number of his people, and in preserving in Rome itself a remnant to fear his name. Thus matters went on for

* Acts xxviii. 31. 2 Tim. iv. 6.

about three hundred years, during which period it was common for Christians to encounter afflictions of every name. "Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword"—seemed all to combine to erase the cause and followers of Christ from the earth. So long as this state of things continued, those who were most prominent in their profession, and most active in disseminating the truth, were like marks set up for the arrows of the adversary. And who were so much exposed as the public teachers of the churches! It may be easily gathered from the advices given them, that their situation was not only one of peril in common with their brethren, but one in which they needed more than ordinary faith and fortitude to stand against the dangers and deaths they had to confront. Without possessing these in a high degree, it was impossible they could perform their part aright, or fill with propriety the honourable station they were called to occupy. There was, indeed, a crown presented them, but not one of an earthly description, nor to be received from the hand of man. The promise was, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Imagine to yourselves this state of things;—a pastor, in the midst of his important duties, dragged from the midst of his beloved flock, and from the embraces of his weeping family, to seal with his blood the testimony he had borne! Whether they were permitted to bury him like Stephen or not, an early question arose, Who will stand forth and fill his room? Who, like him, will resist unto blood, and brave unto death, the growing menaces of infuriated persecutors? A novice, or a person faint-hearted, could not fill such a post. It required one fully apprised of the ground he took, and well prepared to meet the hostility he might expect, to enter the field in such a season. The cost counted, and the post taken—how honourable to fall as his predecessor had fallen!

Amidst this opposition, which lasted till the beginning of the fourth century, the Word of God had free course and was glorified; but in such times any one may easily see that worldly-minded men, who were in pursuit of earthly favours and emoluments, would not

profess the gospel at all, far less would they choose for a calling the pastoral office which of necessity exposed them as the butt of the enemies' shafts. Men altogether of a different stamp must be got, even such as loved not their lives unto the death: it follows, that pastors at Rome and other places, were, at that time, holy men, ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of the truth, even to the laying down of their lives.

When Constantine, called the Great, began to favour those who had been persecuted, to build splendid places of worship, to bestow favours upon the bishops, and, to attempt the amalgamation of a spiritual with a worldly kingdom, a speedy change took place. Open persecution ceased, but true religion declined. When situations, loaded with emoluments and rid of peril, presented themselves, many who in other times would have spurned the idea of becoming pastors, now filled that office. How utterly unqualified they were for such a sacred calling was soon made manifest and extensively felt, by the rapid decay of former devotedness to God and to his cause. The commencement of papal domination may be traced beyond this period; but nothing more will be discovered than the mere embryo of that power which became so formidable afterwards. Some have advocated the conduct of Constantine, as if no blemish had stained it; others have condemned that same conduct, as if nothing good had been connected with it; perhaps the truth may be found between the two extremes. That it is the duty of the civil magistrate to protect the lives, the property, and personal freedom of the subjects—ruling in the fear of God, a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, few seek to deny. That Christians ought to be thankful when the fiery sword of open violence and injustice is sheathed, cannot admit of a doubt; while, at the same time, it must be admitted, that even this consummation may be bought at too high a price; and, when this takes place, instead of reaping an advantage, the cause of truth sustains a loss not easily repaired, and receives a wound very difficult of cure. How fearful, how tremendous an illustration of this followed the unwarrantable transactions of that period all history combines to confirm. “To court Constantine's favour,

or obtain preferments, millions of heathens, without any change on their hearts, professed themselves Christians.” * “After he took the church under his wing, the bishops of Rome gradually increased in riches and power, and surpassed all their brethren in the grandeur and magnificence of their own church, and in the splendour and luxury of their manner of living. The consequence was, the See of Rome became an object of clerical ambition, and severe contests for the election became common. Upon these occasions, the city of Rome was convulsed with the contentions of the partisans of rival bishops, which were frequently attended with bloodshed and massacres of the peaceable inhabitants.” “The matter was brought to the sword; many priests were murdered, even in the churches;—the whole of Rome would have been in a tumult, and kept so for a considerable time.” Still, though so far exalted in wealth and influence above their brethren, they were only citizens, and submitted like others to the laws of the emperors. But men thus elevated could not long content themselves with being in any respect under subordination, or on a level with others. Neglect of duty, and the pursuit of worldly pleasures, were accompanied with an insatiable lust of power, which indicated the rapid approach of the man of sin to that unprecedented height which, in the mysterious providence of God, he was to be permitted to reach.

One of the early symptoms of this elevation was a discontentment shown with the plain scriptural name of pastor or bishop. They took to themselves the name of chief bishop, or archbishop, which they continued to retain for two hundred years—from the year of our Lord 320 to 520. They then changed this for a higher name, patriarch, that is, a bishop superior to archbishops. This, we are informed, continued until the beginning of the seventh century.

For a considerable time, the bishop of Rome claimed no superiority over bishops in other quarters of the world, although he excelled them all in opulence and splendour. *Officially* they were all upon a level. They

* Brown's Fulfilment of Scripture, p. 230.

meddled not with him and his flock; nor did he assume to dictate to them or theirs. By and by, when his influence increased, and he felt that he stood on higher ground than his fellows occupied, he began to lord it over them.

When God sent Moses to Pharoah, the demand he had to make was told in full at once: "Let my people go that they may serve me." When Christ calls any to follow him, he states at the commencement the whole required amount of sacrifice: "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Antichrist pursues another plan, and is a deceiver like his master. Even in the days of the apostles he began to work, but how diminutive his operations and limited his ambition from what appeared in the times we are now speaking of; and how feeble and restricted these to what were afterwards developed. In the beginning the demands were few, but they increased in number and magnitude, till he reached the pinnacle of his power. How very different, for example, the consecration of the bishop of Rome from the ordination of an humble pastor. The contest of election being over, and its being settled who was the successful candidate, there followed a solemn triumph, and a public show of rejoicing. But there are no bounds to ambition; that which received at first the name of consecration is now denominated the coronation;—nothing is too daring for these usurpers. "At the pope's inauguration, he makes the table of the Lord his footstool, and in that posture receives the adoration of his cardinals."* At length, dissatisfied with the name bishop, archbishop, or patriarch, that of pope was substituted as superior to the whole, and to be applied only to the bishop of Rome; and, from that time down to the present day, there has been a succession of wicked men occupying what they call the chair of St. Peter. The description given of them by Mr. Brown of Haddington is true: "The popes laboured to set themselves examples of ignorance, pride, ambition, blasphemy, atheism, perjury, horrid unchastity, and

devilish arts."* It is not meant that all the popes have been alike wicked or abandoned, but that no man of principle or of piety could at any time occupy the seat he fills. This is plain; for if there, it is his business to countenance and propagate whatever is opposed to truth and holiness. His conscience must be defiled and seared as with a hot iron; yea, every proper impression must be erased, every thing sacred given up, and the part of a traitor acted, before any man can yield to be pope of Rome. If you think this is saying too much, I only ask either the suspension of your judgment for a little, or that you take the briefest survey of what the office of pope involves. It may be justly applied to the whole what was said of one pope: "He entered like a fox, lived like a lion, and died like a dog."† Their history is one of confusion, turmoil, and boundless ambition.

It has happened several times that two popes, and even three, have existed at once. Repeatedly, to answer a purpose, has the manner of their election been changed. The pope was at first chosen by the senate, clergy, and people of Rome; by and by, the clergy alone took part in the election; for a time, the emperor chose him; and now, the cardinals meet in conclave for the purpose of choosing one of themselves to be pope. When several have claimed the election, or usurped the name, they have sat, one in one chair and another in another, each claiming the supremacy, and calling the power and aid of neighbouring princes to put down his antagonist by blood, or at whatever expense. Each has sat in his chair pouring anathemas upon his rival, calling him antichrist, tyrant, thief, son of Belial, and foaming out every vile epithet that could be devised. Papists talk of unbroken succession, but how can they make it out? For not only have such things been carried on more than once or twice; but the bishops themselves have sometimes disputed for years together who should be pope, keeping not only Rome, but a great part of the world

* Harm. of Scrip. Proph. p. 243.

† "Qui intravit ut vulpes, regnavit ut leo, mortuus est ut canis."

in a ferment, raising the most bloody wars to settle their disputes, and, as has been aptly said, “by brute force to place a brute pope in St. Peter’s chair.”

Nor does it always happen that the present pope sanctions all his predecessor did, although confirmed by the decrees of a council. One has even caused his predecessor to be unburied and degraded in every possible manner. The two fingers of the right hand by which they chiefly consecrate, have been cut off and cast into the Tiber. John XV. was made pope by the Romans; but Boniface corrupted them with money, and by this holy father, John was deposed, starved to death, and his body given to the dogs. This happened in the tenth century.

These are the men whom future popes have called saints, and whose names they have canonized, holding them up as the most holy persons for the admiration of future ages. But should any speak of reformation in the pope of Rome—there is but one way by which it can be accomplished—his leaving the chair. Continuing pontiff, reformation is impossible.

It is melancholy to think, even as matters stand, the members of the Popish Church maintain, that the pope is God on earth; nay, that he is *more than God*, inasmuch as he can do whatsoever he pleaseth, even things unlawful. The true God cannot sin, nor countenance sin; but if the pope command vice to be practised, and virtue to be shunned, men are obliged under pain of eternal damnation to act accordingly. This is the very language of their great oracle, Belarmine. The pope not only professes to forgive sin himself, but to give power to his priests in every part of the world to forgive sin, which is to presume the prerogative of God, as the Scriptures testify of him. Indeed, he *professedly* holds the place of God on earth, and calls himself “The anointed of the Lord, the sovereign pontiff, the light of the world, and the father of kings.” He, “The bishop of all the world, can dispense with the laws of God; of righteousness he can make unrighteousness; his will is a reason for what he does; and it is permitted of none to judge of his sentence.” These are the tenets which Popish writers maintain, and other things of the same kind are abundantly held forth by them. Often have

the popes declared that they can absolve subjects from the oaths of allegiance to their prince, and that the pope alone ought to be worshipped as God. To such a height did matters at length arrive that, “in the Book of the Church,” it is asserted, “That all pontifical decrees ought for ever to be observed by all men, like the Word of God, to be received as if they came from the mouth of St. Peter himself, and held like canonical Scripture. Neither the Catholic faith, nor the four Evangelists, could avail those who rejected them, this being a sin which was never to be remitted. Christ had bestowed upon the pope, when he spake as such, the same infallibility which resided in himself.” Yea, “he could change the nature of things, and make injustice justice. Nor was it possible he could be amenable to any secular power, for he had been called God by Constantine, and God was not to be judged by man; under God, the salvation of all the faithful depended on him, and the commentators even gave him the blasphemous appellation of our ‘lord god the pope.’” Even Bellarmine affirmed, “That if the pope say that black is white, or white is black; that darkness is light, or light is darkness, we must believe it, because his infallible holiness saith it.”—And, “If the pope did err, commanding vices and forbidding virtues, the church should be bound to believe, that vices are good, and virtues evil, unless she would sin against conscience.” The *Canon law* thus exalts the pontiff: “If the pope by his negligence or remissness in his work, be found unprofitable to himself or others; or, if he should draw with him innumerable souls by heaps or troops to hell; yet might no mortal man be so bold or presumptuous to reprove him, because he is the judge of all, to be judged by none.”*

Wild and wicked as all this theory may seem; what has proved the greatest snare in it is, that *in pretence* it comes all from heaven, and receives the sanction of the Book of God. We feel almost ashamed to put the question, Does it *require* the authority of that book to prove the whole a forgery? Look stedfastly at what is before

* Bell. de Pont. lib. iv. cap. 5.—Corpus Juris Can. Distinct. 40.
—Morning Exercises, p. 186.

you ; can any man in his senses believe that the decrepit pope of Rome is God on earth ? If he can, then with whatever difficulty he gets over the gnat, he has none in swallowing the camel : in his estimate a camel may pass through the eye of a needle, and nothing will for once be denied or doubted which the pope affirms.

After what you have heard little more requires to be added to illustrate the character of those men whom the world has wondered after. Let the following abridgment suffice :—

In the beginning of the seventh century, Boniface III. was made pope by the emperor Phocas, one of the foulest and most barbarous tyrants that ever had existence.*

His successor obtained of the emperor the temple in Rome, called the Pantheon, that is, the temple of all gods ; and this idolatrous temple he dedicated to the virgin Mary, and to all the martyrs. The Romans were, in their own way, a liberal minded people—they prevented not heathens of other nations from worshipping whatever idols they chose, even in Rome, as the very name of this temple indicated. When the pope removed the old deities, it was but to fill their place with gods equally unable to save. The virgin Mary and all the martyrs had no more power to deliver from sin and wrath than the idols of wood and stone which the heathens worshipped.

In a little after, a third pope commanded divine service to be gone through in a language not understood by the people.

Agathus, who came after him, commanded all Christians to believe that whatever the pope said was as true as if “pronounced by the mouth of God.” Now, keep in mind that, while aspiring after more, “no pope ever lost what his predecessor had gained.”

About the middle of the eighth century, the pope was raised to the rank of a prince ; and, in the beginning of the ninth, pope Constantine I. commanded the images in the temple to be worshipped. About fifty years after-

* Protestant, vol. II. p. 431.

wards, Pepin, king of France, gave lands to the pope, and was, with all his wickedness, so humble a devotee to his holiness, that he, though king, prostrated himself on the ground before him and kissed his toe. He also with one hand held the stirrup of his saddle, and with the other the bridle reins, until the pope mounted his horse. This increase of riches was accompanied with an increase of haughtiness and presumption. He now took to himself the name of “god on the earth, over all Christian princes and subjects.” Henceforth their demands were extravagant ; they claimed the right even to crown emperors, and have obedience from them also. In the election of a new pope, the emperor, whoever he might be, was no longer consulted.

Leo IV. was the first who thought of promising paradise to all who would fight against heretics. He did so in the year 817. This was to say that the keys of all worlds were in his hand ; for he said that he would give or withhold heaven itself, as he thought proper. It was therefore ordained, that no magistrate have any authority over the pope, and that all his constitutions should be received as of equal authority with those of the apostles. After this the highest powers on earth began to be overlooked, and scarcely even consulted in any thing ; nay, they were designedly and entirely disregarded.

About the end of the ninth century, pope Stephen V. “commanded all men of necessity to observe the statutes of the *Roman* church, or else they could not be saved.” It was further promulgated, “That all the earth was the pope’s ; that he may do as he pleases without reckoning with, or regarding God, his Son Jesus Christ, or his apostles.” Such pretensions can only excite in our breasts feelings of indignation, and a disposition to ridicule the vain mortals who thus outraged every thing like decency, trampled upon all the rights of man, and turned into mockery things sacred and divine. We may think so, and with impunity declare our mind ; but to such a height had the arrogance of the pope reached in the twelfth century, that Frederick, the emperor, a powerful and warlike prince, having dared to offend the pontiff, nothing would satisfy him short of the emperor’s prostrating himself at his feet,

and in that attitude to beg mercy. He did so ; for the pope had a dear son of the good emperor's in prison, and mercy was never an attribute which adorned a pope :—he did so ; he lay down at his feet, and implored his forgiveness. While in this prostrate attitude, the pope put his foot on the emperor's neck, and said, "It is written, Thou shalt tread on the lion, and the adder ; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot." To which the emperor, full of shame, replied, "*Not to thee but to Peter.*" Pulling down the emperor's neck with his foot, the haughty pope retorted, "*Both to me and to Peter.*" Frederick had no alternative ; he must keep his silence, or lose his son.

Soon after this, Louis, king of France, and Henry, king of England, held the bridle of the pope's horse, one on the right, and the other on the left, leading the beast on which his holiness rode through the city. *He* was arrayed in the most splendid manner ; while they were reduced to the office of footboys.

You have heard of the excommunication of Henry VIII. ; perhaps you have read the filthy and profane language used by the holy father upon that occasion. Emperors and kings has he obliged to travel barefooted to the gates of his palace in the depth of winter, and has kept them standing there almost naked and fasting for several days, before he would give them an audience ; but should any wish fuller information, we refer them to the history of that period when the popes reached the height of their power, when they "proudly assumed the title of *masters of the world*, and that their authority, by divine right, comprehended every other, both temporal and spiritual,—and that it was absolutely indispensable to salvation that *every human creature* be subject to the pope of Rome."

To convince all of the usurpation of these wicked men, I shall, however, produce another specimen, by no means the worst. The emperor Louis of Bavaria, a prince of superior merit, having incurred the censure of the church for defending the rights of his crown, could not obtain absolution, notwithstanding the most humiliating condescensions, and the offer which he made to resign the imperial dignity and his property to the discretion of the pope. He was loaded with curses and

anathemas. The Bull of pope Clement VI. which was issued against him was as follows :—"May God smite him with madness and disease ; may heaven crush him with its thunderbolts ; may the wrath of God, of St. Peter, and St. Paul, fall on him in this world and the next ; may the whole universe combine against him ; may the earth swallow him up alive ; may his name perish in the first generation, and his memory disappear from the earth ; may all the elements conspire against him ; may his children, delivered into the hands of his enemies, be massacred before the eyes of their father."* This Bull was issued in the year 1302.

The few instances I have presented you with of the unrighteous pretensions of the popes of Rome, prove their unquenchable avarice and unparalleled wickedness. I have selected them from various undoubted authorities, and through various and distant ages, that all may be satisfied that the colouring in the picture is not too high. We finish this part by giving a true description of the pope's character as expressed by the Grecian Christians. He had sent them a letter to become his subjects, as there was but one church, and he was the head of it. Their reply was shrewd and energetic : "Thy power over thy subjects we verily believe to be great ; thy exceeding pride we cannot suffer ; thy covetousness we cannot satisfy ; the devil is with thee, for the Lord is with us."

In the preceding account I have confined myself almost entirely to one feature in the history of the Roman pontiffs, *their ambition*, to show you, without interrupting the narrative, how they came to obtain such power. With regard to their worse than brutal sensuality, and the excesses of their uncleanness that have come to light, I would not affront myself or you by introducing a subject so thoroughly abominable. To those who choose, the page of history is open for inspection ; is stained with their vicious deeds, and amply witnesses to their foul, adulterous, unnatural crimes.

Neither has much been said of their cruelty. This, however, must not be passed over in silence ; for the

* Koch's History of the Revolutions in Europe, p. 227.

papal chair has been filled with a race of men who never regarded the life of their fellow-creatures. Justly have they been styled "human butchers," who have not scrupled to stir up fathers against children, and children against fathers, whenever it tended to further any of their own designs. They have neither spared nor pitied their own cardinals, whenever they sought to oppose them. Pope Urban, in the fourteenth century, caused five of these dignitaries to be put into as many sacks, and to be cast into the sea. Soon after he made other three of them be roasted in a furnace, and then carried about from place to place, that he might terrify the people from doing aught against his authority.

The pope of Rome was once displeased with the people of Scotland for putting to death, without his licence, one of his bishops that was robbing them of their substance. The king, Alexander, was threatened, and becoming intimidated, to appease Honorius III., he put to death four hundred of his own subjects; yea, criminally blotted out the very memory of their families—all to please an angry pope of Rome, who had no right whatever to disturb him, or give laws to his people.

Pope Innocent III. burnt a hundred persons in one day, because they said "it was lawful for every Christian to eat flesh, and to marry at any time of the year." Liberty of conscience, especially upon religious subjects, is what no pope will grant, if he dare use violence to prevent it. The saints of the Most High have always been the objects of his implacable hatred. He has refrained from shedding their blood only when necessity was laid upon him—the restraint removed, and then for the renewal of the devastation; then, like a hungry lion, or a bear bereaved, the insatiable revenge has broken out in fresh and infuriated attacks. The tale is tedious and heart-rending. Every person knows more or less of it; but to see distinctly through the whole, would require an extensive knowledge of the history of many ages and kingdoms. The more wide your range of information becomes, the more of this is developed, and you are led to wonder at the unabated thirst for the blood of saints which has distinguished these men—a thirst that, like the yawning grave and devouring fire,

never says, "Enough." "Give, give," has still been the cry from the papal chair.

The number of murders which the head of the Romish church has been at one time and another guilty of, is reckoned to be not less than 50,000,000, and all these put to death for heretics. "If we may believe historians," says the learned Dr. Moore, "pope Julius was, in seven years, the occasion of the slaughter of 200,000 Christians. The massacre in France cut off 100,000 in three months. P. Periconius avers that, in the persecution of the Albigenes and Waldenses, 1,000,000 lost their lives. From the beginning of the Jesuits, till 1580, that is, thirty or forty years, 900,000 perished, saith Balduinus. The Duke of Alva, by the public executioner, put 36,000 to death. Vergerius affirms, that the inquisition, in thirty years, destroyed 150,000. To all this I may add the Irish rebellion, in which 300,000 were destroyed, as Lord Orery reports, in a paper printed in the reign of Charles II.)* By every private and public scheme within their reach, they have struggled to extinguish Christians, and the Christian religion, from the footstool of God. They have laid and prosecuted their merciless plans with a restlessness and violence that give no doubtful omen of their origin. Persecution is constantly and of necessity interwoven with the system of Popery; this has been both seen and felt wherever it has spread, and it will be seen and felt wherever it spreads in time to come. The moment a son begins to think differently from his father, the father's love and pity, however strong and deeply-rooted before, cease from that time henceforth. If the father retains one grain of Popery in his breast; if he continues a faithful son of the church, his affection for that heretical son is extinguished, his confidence in him is broken, and he becomes his persecutor. Take an illustration of this kind: "In Valladolid, a gentleman had two daughters in the inquisition, condemned to be burned for their serving Jesus Christ rather than

* Fleming's Rise and Fall of the Papacy, p. 27.—Brown's Harmony of Scrip. Proph. p. 249.—Spirit of the Church of Rome, p. 146.

the pope. The father, who was a knight and a man of influence, desired the inquisitors to permit them to return home, that he might endeavour by all means to change their minds; priests and friars were called in to dispute with these young disciples of Jesus, but failed in convincing them. The father seeing that he could not prevail upon them to recant, went himself and cut the wood, and kindled the fires in which his two daughters were burnt to ashes." Some shudder at the rehearsal; but why should they? this was only acting in character, for that father was a Papist, an humble imitator of his holiness the pope, that son of perdition. The above happened in the end of the sixteenth century.

In all countries truly Popish, liberty of conscience is a thing utterly unknown. Even in France where something of the kind was professedly given, who does not recollect of the slaughters at Nismes in the present age. Protestants in France are now on the increase, and greater liberty is at present granted; but at a more recent date than the persecutions just alluded to, there was so little known of liberty of conscience in Paris itself, that a sermon to be preached by a Protestant minister could not be intimated publicly. They must go from house to house, in a private way, where they knew their friends resided, tell them of it, and then meet for worship in some upper room, for fear of the Papists.

It has been observed, that the persecuting spirit of the popes is more satanic than perhaps many are aware, or than some, without investigation, may be disposed to credit. Every schoolboy knows how the bloody warriors, Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar, relented and even wept at times when their foes were slain. In their horrific determination before the conflict commenced, and in the wildness of their fury during its continuance, they seemed void of any thing like compunction; but let the heads of their antagonists be produced, and their revenge was at an end; yea, lamentations were sometimes raised. Who could be more bitter enemies than Cæsar and Pompey; but when Pompey's head was brought, Cæsar wept over it. Notwithstanding all the blood-stained fields the veteran soldier had witnessed, he could not help giving indications that still a portion of the milk of human kindness remained.

The yearnings of nature came indeed too late; yet they did come. In the life of any pope, did you ever read of any thing of this kind? Not satisfied with the death of his opponents, he, tiger-like, has been frequently known to exult for joy over the tortures, and after the dissolution, of those whom he chose to call heretics. Take one proof out of many to corroborate what to some may appear hard to believe:—

After the memorable St. Bartholomew's day, when, within a week, 10,000 Protestants were put to death in Paris alone, when the dead bodies of God's people were laid in heaps at the heads of the streets and through the lanes of the city, when the river was of a truth dyed with human blood, and, when, throughout the rest of France, within the same short space of time, it is calculated that 70,000 Protestants perished through Popish perfidy:—the news having reached Rome, the pope was very glad, and gave public demonstrations of the same. A jubilee was instituted, public thanks to the Almighty God were given, and Charles was congratulated and complimented for extirpating so many heretics in cold blood. Far from clothing himself in sackcloth, or calling for mourning, he fed his heart. It was to him a day of slaughter. "The messenger that brought the news of this monstrous barbarity, received a thousand crowns for his reward, the letter was read in the conclave, *Te Deum* sung in all the churches, cannons discharged, bonfires made, and a jubilee published throughout all Christendom. And the better to keep up the memory of this glorious transaction, the pope caused it to be painted round his great hall at Lateran, and there recorded it in marble." *

A difficulty has ere now, perhaps, suggested itself to some present: How does it come to pass that the pope of Rome should have so much power to abuse, and that all his adherents should cleave so closely to a person of his description? I have shown you how he came by his power, and shall now tell you how it comes to pass that the members of that community cling to him closely. All who profess the Romish religion acknowledge their

* Murray's Lectures on the Revelation, vol. II. p. 139.

dependence on the pope. The highest civil magistrates, as kings and emperors; and those who fill the highest offices in the church, as cardinals, bishops, and priests—all pay homage to the pope as their head, and all are solemnly sworn to be faithful to his interests; to do nothing contrary to his will, or without his consent. The priests and bishops are all sworn to defend the Roman papacy and the royalties of St. Peter. The authority and honours of their lord the pope, they are sworn to preserve, defend, increase, and advance. They are sworn to reveal nothing that may be prejudicial to his interests. They are sworn to give him intimation if any thing be done injurious to his interests whoever he may be that is guilty of such offence. They are sworn to oppose heretics, schismatics, and rebels, to their said lord—and all this to the utmost of their power. Now, it only requires you to bear in mind how one order of persons in this system is made to depend on another, till you reach the ghastly gristly figure at its head, to perceive the secret of his influence over all his adherents. There is not a Popish priest but is acquainted with the very secrets of his people. The reservation of one known sin, makes their auricular confession of no avail. This places them under his authority. But the people are not more slaves to the priest than he is to the bishop, or than the bishop is to the archbishop, and so on, till after many a serpentine winding, you reach the fiend now before you.

The system, remember, is not the production of a day; nor is it the work of a day to comprehend its intricacies, or perceive its entire mode of operation. It is not a hasty, loose, and undigested plan; but a plan matured, in which one part is made to depend on another from top to bottom. If you have any wish to see an exhibition of all that Satan can put together, or bring into operation, for the deceiving and ruining of immortal souls, you have just to acquaint yourselves with the system of Popery. To expect good to issue from it in church or state, is to expect the blessing of salvation to emanate from the mouth of hell. Bear it in mind, and let the recollection have its due weight, that from Popery no blessing can arise to the human race. Wherever it plants its cancerous foot, and gains an esta-

blishment, it brings with it sterility, blasting, and devastation. Every step it gains, every stage it advances, must, in the very nature of things, bear along in its progress an accumulation of misery to man. No good can prosper where it prevails. It is the bane of civil society, and the canker-worm at the root of every institution that has upon it the stamp of godliness. This is no fabulous tale, no hyperbolical statement, no fitful ebullition of a heated brain; but the sober, though alarming, truth.

I go on to mention those passages which are quoted in order to prove the pope's supremacy, or his being the successor of Peter. While almost every thing said of this apostle, such as Christ's preaching out of his boat, his being sent to the sea to take a piece of silver from the mouth of a fish, and all such are huddled together and made a handle of by the Church of Rome to prove this vile doctrine; yet there are only two passages of Scripture seriously referred to, and insisted on, as the props and pillars of this part of the system. How absurdly they are filched in to answer the intended purpose will not take much time to show. He that hath an ear let him hear, and judge for himself. One of them is: "So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." * And what is there here about the supremacy of the pope of Rome? It really requires nothing beyond the capacity of a child to read Peter's three times repeated denial to see the force and application of the thrice-repeated question,

* John xxi. 15—17.

with the thrice repeated advice founded upon it. But it requires the aid of an art very disreputable to cast any darkness or doubt around the words just read. In themselves there is neither intricacy nor mystery; but there is an art of darkening counsel with words without knowledge, and the Romish exposition of these words presents you with a specimen quite to the point. Because Christ commanded Peter to feed his sheep and feed his lambs, therefore, say they, Christ gave Peter the charge of the church universal. From these words they endeavour to prove that Peter was made the head of the church on earth; that the sheep are the pastors, and the lambs the members of the church. Strange work! this is to make shepherds of the sheep. If the Bible is to be explained after this fashion, then truly it is a book of riddles. We may shut it in despair, and not be ashamed, whether learned or unlearned, to confess that it is a sealed book to us. But this is quite in unison with Popish expositions. Thus, where it is said, "Thou hast put all things under his feet," "that is," say they, "under the pope's feet;—the beasts of the field, that is, men on earth; the fish of the sea, that is, souls in purgatory; the fowls of the air, that is, souls in heaven canonized by the pope." Admit this mode of exposition, and it matters little what are the pretensions of the book—we can see in it nothing but absurdities. Well might John Calvin assert: "Papists blaspheme God, wresting, falsifying, marring, and corrupting the whole holy Scripture, so as they stick not to scorn God and all his word."*

When our blessed Lord gave intimation to the disciples of the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the flock, they all declared their determination rather to die with than forsake him. In the professions of firm attachment, Peter was first, and loudest, and last. His Master's assertions were but little heeded; for his part, he considered a denial of Christ quite impossible. Others might do so, his fellows might do so; but for himself he never would. When the word of man contradicts the Word of God, we may be reminded of

* Calvin on Job, xxxviii. 2.

what he said by the mouth of his prophet: "All the remnant of Judah shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs." It came to pass as Jesus had spoken; openly and without oaths and curses, Peter denied him thrice. Such cowardice and treachery were humbling in the extreme. It is not easy to conceive the agony of his mind when he had leisure to investigate the part he had acted. Never again, we may easily suppose, could Peter have filled the apostolic office without receiving fresh and extraordinary encouragement to do so. The words under consideration afforded this; and although the repetition of the question grieved him, as if it were a matter of doubt whether he loved his Master; still, a little reflection would soon bring all to rights and pacify his mind, which, after being humbled, required to be strengthened.

A short while before, and Peter imagined that his love to his Lord surpassed the love of the other disciples; but now, when Jesus proposed the question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" he would no longer judge for his neighbour; far less draw a favourable conclusion regarding himself. His conscience witnessed for him, that he loved the Lord; while he would venture no more such bold assertions as he did before his fall. Jesus, full of compassion, fortifies his mind, and by the command to feed his lambs and his sheep, restores him to his honourable calling. When taken from the shores of Galilee to follow Christ, the promise made to him was, in allusion to the occupation he had left, "Henceforth thou shalt catch men." So here, he is commissioned to tend the flock of Christ; to care for the young and the old that he had purchased with his blood. Not that this was to be *his* work exclusively; but Peter felt that without this warrant he could not engage in it at all; and when this was graciously given, it placed him again only on a footing with the other apostles. It needs not surprise us, but Christ's words upon this occasion seem never to have been forgotten. There appears to be an evident allusion to them at a very late period of his life; he says, in addressing the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you," and calls himself by the humble name of "an elder." In regard to precedence or power over

his brethren, it was what he never possessed, nor ever presumed to claim. The sheep and the lambs were not his but Christ's; wholly, only Christ's, and the more you think of him as the ONE Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, the better. He is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; the whole church is his, purchased, called, and saved by him. There is no superiority, as the church of Rome understands it, among his servants; one is their Master, and they are all brethren. When Jesus sent out the apostles to preach the gospel, he said not to Peter more than the rest, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

It is also worthy of notice, that, in the passage under review, there is in the original not that sameness which appears in our translation, and in the Vulgate. "The precepts," as Dr. Campbell on the place very justly remarks, "are not synonymous. The latter is properly, provide them in pasture; the former implies also guide, watch, and defend them." Taken together, they include the whole work to which Peter was called, and point out the various duties he was to perform towards the tender and the full grown, the babes, the young men, and the fathers. But all this would apply to Mahomet with equal justice as to the pope of Rome.* The dissimilitude is not greater in the one case than in the other.

Papal supremacy is advocated also from the following passage:—"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I

will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."* I have read to you the whole paragraph that you may have the advantage of perceiving more distinctly the truth it contains. It is altogether an important passage, but has in it some difficulties we had not to encounter in the former case; still, these are far from being insurmountable.

In a private interview with his disciples, Jesus asked them concerning the opinions of men about himself. They tell him what they had heard, and how various the sentiments were which men held concerning him. It is remarkable enough, that, amidst the variety specified, not one of them was correct. That he was some extraordinary person risen from the dead, seems to have been the general persuasion; at least, so far as the apostles knew. All who thought so were in error; but, instead of rectifying this in the meantime, our Lord puts the question directly to themselves, "Whom say ye that I am?" There was no shifting this, and there appears on their part no disposition to do so. Without embarrassment or evasion, "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Three things are here affirmed of Jesus,—that he was the Christ—that he was the Son of man—and, that he was the Son of God. The Son of man, and the Son of God, are distinct titles of the Messiah. The title of the Son of man belongs to him as God the Son; the title of the Son of God belongs to him as man. The former characterizes him as that one of the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity who was made man; the other characterizes him as that man who was united to the Godhead. St. Peter's confession, therefore, amounts to a full acknowledgment of the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and the truth of this faith is the rock upon

* Nihil ad Papam magis pertinet quàm ad Mahometum.—*Cal. in loco.*

* Matt. xvi. 13—20.

which Christ promises to build his church,"* a truth which, whether you speak of its paramount importance, its infinite richness, or its delightful application, stands forth conspicuous for its worth and dignity even among the verities of divine revelation—a truth which, as Christ himself immediately asserts, could only be revealed by his Father in heaven. On account of this revelation given, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona." Whether spoken of as individuals, or as a whole, God's people are frequently denominated blessed. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." The knowledge of Christ as a Saviour is necessarily accompanied and followed with peculiar blessedness.

We come now to the words about which there has been so much debate: "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Let your minds rest upon the first announcement here. It has not, so far as I know, held that prominence in the exposition of the passage which it seems to me to demand. I, therefore, entreat your close attention to the words, "*And I say also unto thee*," which must either convey the idea of confirming Peter's mind in what had been already revealed to him by the Father, by testifying that he, the Son, was of the same mind with the Father; or, the idea of adding something from himself to that revelation already given by the Father. That this last is the true interpretation seems evident; because what Christ now says, contains information which had not been previously communicated by the Father to Peter. The words, "*and I say also*," are emphatic, and are introductory to the bestowment of a fresh favour, even an addition to the revelation already made. The Father had revealed to Peter the truth concerning the character and dignity of his only-begotten Son; the Son now reveals to him what God manifested in the flesh should accomplish in building his church; that is, in

* Horsley's Sermons, p. 155.—For some admirable remarks on this subject, see Protestant, No. 99.

saving a multitude which cannot be numbered. Keeping this in view, it shows, independently of other proof, to what only our Lord could refer when he added, "upon this rock I will build my church;" namely, to what the Father had communicated; and when you join to this, what Jesus added, you see the foundation and the building united; in other words, the plan laid, and the work executed. There is a superstructure to be raised to the praise of the glory of God's grace. The Father revealed to Peter the foundation, and Jesus adds, I will build thereupon. He distinctly attributes the work of building to himself, and claims the church as his own. "He shall build the temple of the Lord," saith the prophet; "even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory."

But then it is said, he will build the church "upon this rock." "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build"—the question is, Upon what rock? Peter, say Romanists; Christ, or, which amounts to the same, the Father's revelation to Peter, say Protestants; and where lies the truth? If Peter be the rock upon which the church is built, then it rests not on Christ. If Christ is the rock, then it cannot be Peter; for there is but one stone laid for a foundation. When Simon was first brought to Jesus, Jesus beheld him and said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone," which word, stone, is the same as Peter; the only difference is, in the one case it is not translated, and in the other it is. The term signifies a piece or fragment of a rock, and so Campbell renders it; "Thou art named rock, and upon this rock will I build." In the highest figurative sense, Peter can signify nothing more than one stone or fragment, as Jesus himself fully explained when he called him "a stone." Hence the word can represent only one member of Christ's church, or one stone in the building of which he is the foundation. On the other hand, the word rock in the following clause can signify nothing less than a mountain of defence, and is applicable only to God.* The very

* See Fletcher's Lectures on the Roman Catholic Religion.—Ap. Note L.

grammatical construction of the passage forbids the application to Peter, as if the building rested upon him. It is not upon him, or thee, Peter; but upon *THIS ROCK*. In saying "Thou art Peter," or a stone, his Master kindly reminded him that he had not forgot what he said to him at their first interview; but he proceeds to speak not of a stone, but of "this rock," words upon which great stress is laid, and which might with propriety be read "this self-same rock," in the same way as Jesus spoke of his body; "destroy this temple*—he spoke of the temple of his body:" so here "this rock"—he spoke of himself as "the Christ the Son of the living God." If difficulty there be in the passage under consideration, Peter solves it to us in his first epistle. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious."† Add to this the words of the same apostle to the elders of Israel, which give ample satisfaction on the point: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Those who apply the words "*this rock*" to Peter, as if he were the foundation or head of the church, can find no countenance for doing so in the Word of God. Restrict them to Christ, and the most beautiful harmony appears; apply them to any one else, and nothing but confusion is seen.

It is added, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This language is metaphorical; and that which the Lord

* Τὸν ναὸν τούτου, this very temple; just as ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ, this very rock.

† See Ewing's Greek Lexicon on the word Πέτρος.

here conferred on Peter was afterwards conferred on all the apostles.* The words "binding and loosing," in the writings of one Evangelist, are explained by "retaining and remitting," found in those of another. In both cases "they relate to the authority which Christ conferred on his inspired apostles with regard to doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the church." The apostles of the Lamb were all on a level, were all brethren. Peter believed, and was highly favoured; they believed also, and had the same blessing bestowed upon them. It is true that Peter was honoured to open the door of faith to the Gentiles; and some are of opinion that the "binding and loosing" here spoken of refer to that event; while they are far from allowing any thing like superiority of one apostle to another. Bishop Horsley was of this mind; but mark how he treats the subject:—"No authority over the rest of the apostles was given to St. Peter by the promise made to him, in either or in both its branches; nor was any right conveyed to him which could descend from him to his successors in any See. The promise was, indeed, simply a prediction that he would be selected to be the first instrument in a great work of Providence, which was of such a nature as to be done once for all; and, being done, it cannot be repeated. The great apostle fulfilled his commission in his life-time. He applied his key—he turned back the lock—he loosed and he bound. The gates of the kingdom of heaven *are* thrown open—the ceremonial law is abrogated—the moral law is confirmed—and the successors of St. Peter in the See of Rome, can give neither furtherance nor obstruction to the business."†

Let all who love the truth rejoice; Christ sitteth King for ever. The government is entirely upon his shoulder, and into his faithful hand all power in heaven and in earth is committed. When he left this world, he gave authority to the apostles to act and speak in his stead. As the Father had sent him, so he sent them to reveal the will of God for the salvation of the

* Matt. xviii. 18.—John xx. 23.

† Horsley's Sermons, p. 153.

guilty—an errand of awful importance. For the due execution of their mission, they were inspired from above; the Holy Spirit was given them; and none can justly pretend to succeed them, without being possessed, as they were, with the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost. Let no man deceive you with vain words. The apostles have no successors; but they have left behind them their divinely-inspired writings, with the authority of God affixed to them. Assured of this, receive their word as his testimony, and spurn from you with abhorrence the doctrine that would place one on that throne which the Lord Jesus Christ only has a right to fill.

To conclude: Although, as we have shown, the pope of Rome has no title to what he pretends, yet the church is not without a head. By the church, I mean all true believers, wherever they are found, and by whatever name they are called. Over this church Christ reigns, whose power is unlimited, and whose mercy and grace are boundless as his power. What, I ask, could any Roman pontiff do to rescue us when in jeopardy? We might be dead ere the tidings of our calamity reached him, or our ailment might be of such a nature that all his vaunted influence could neither remove nor abate; but here is one, the glorious Redeemer, who is over all, God blessed for ever, who knows our frame, to whom we have continual access, and who has pledged his word that he will both hear and answer our petitions. He is able to deliver from unreasonable and wicked men, and to restrain more formidable foes. Principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places are all under his control. He is the tried, elect, and precious corner-stone, upon which his church shall be built a holy temple to the Lord. This bulwark secures against the assaults of every enemy, and renders it perfectly certain that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church. Having humbled himself even unto death, he is now exalted far above all heavens, to fill all things. Here is our rejoicing; nor do we shrink from acknowledging it. Here is our security; nor are we ashamed to boast of it. Less than what is here declared of the Saviour would be insufficient. Possessed of all this, there is

no room left for a misgiving thought. What is committed to his care can never be lost. The head of the Romish Church may pretend to omnipotence and omniscience if he pleases; every one knows it is the utterance of blasphemy. These are attributes of deity, and incommunicable attributes too. For a poor sinful wretch to profess to be Christ's viceroy, and to possess his authority, is presumption which excites horror in every breast, and makes one recoil instinctively from a system so thoroughly dishonouring to God and destructive to the salvation of man. On the other hand, every heart may leap for joy that receives the intelligence of Christ's headship. He rules in Zion; hence no poor solitary person belonging to him, no distressed family whose trust is in his name, and no collective body of his people, but whose case he knows, and that case he will never despise or overlook. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem. He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." He will plead for his church, and save her also. His is a kingdom that can never be moved. Every weapon formed against Zion shall be blunted and broken, if statesmen and kings, potentates and popes, should all combine in wielding it. His throne is established, and the meanest suppliant before that throne shall for ever live. Nay, more; when the history of every opposer and every pope shall dwindle into a tale of former times, Jesus shall reign, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him, and be blessed in him, and call him blessed.

Need we repeat, that God's people have nothing to fear. We do repeat it; for it is his good pleasure that they, even here, should have strong consolation. Let them only and always rely on him, and he will defend them and be unto them for a sanctuary. If years of famine should come, he will feed them; if seasons of cruel persecution pass over their heads, he will shelter them; and, if abandoned by all, he will never leave nor forsake them. They are the purchase of his blood, and their names are engraven on his heart. They are under his care, and none shall ever pluck them out of his

hand. Through life and through death he will be their guide, and through eternity their exceeding great reward. Let all, therefore, who confide in him, rejoice and be glad; yonder mansions, yonder delightful abodes of bliss, he is gone to prepare and secure for them;—nor shall they be long empty. Press on, Christians, to the prize. Urge your way to glory. Faint not because of difficulties. Your triumphant Leader has shoes of iron for your feet, and a helmet of salvation for a covering to your head. “Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.” O that our Popish neighbours knew the worth of this only Redeemer! O that they were persuaded to flee from idolatry, and trust in the living God!

But, alas! are there not in this Protestant assembly some equally unprepared for glory as the most ignorant and deluded who profess the Romish faith? Are there not here whose creed is sounder, but whose hearts are as unrenewed as theirs?—who are secure in the bosom of a profession, while their unrighteous conduct belies their pretensions to better things? To the careless, the prayerless, the formalist, the sabbath-breaker, the drunkard, and the profane, what shall we say? Shall we lull them to deeper slumbers by humming peace in their ears?—or tell them it shall be well with them although they go on in the ways of their own hearts?—or that they have nothing to fear because their name is Protestant? We are in duty bound to utter far other tidings. We must, whether you will hear or forbear, proclaim your transgression, and with a voice loud and unflinching, set before you your danger. A higher than man sounds the trumpet of alarm against you. “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Such is the solemn voice of inspiration; such is its uniform, unbending, and unchangeable language. Under the curse of God’s broken law, and exposed to the shafts of his righteous indignation, can you still remain in a state of indifference? In the hearing of his awful threatenings against

the workers of iniquity, can you harden yourselves in sin? It is very true that the same Book of God brings the tidings of salvation to the guilty. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.” He tells men of every rank and of every description, that he has no pleasure in their death; yea, he calls upon them and entreats them, by the bowels of mercy, to turn unto him and live: but to every impenitent sinner his language is, that he must repent or perish; he must be born again, or be for ever excluded from his kingdom—no admittance for him there while continuing in a state of alienation of heart from God. He plainly tells him, “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;” that “the wages of sin is death;” that “upon every soul of man that doeth evil, shall come down indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish;” and, that “the wicked shall be turned into hell,” “into that place where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.” These are the true sayings of God. Cease, then, to plant thorns for a dying pillow; cease to heap up wrath against the day of wrath; rouse from the deep lethargy in which you have lain so long. O awake, and hear the friendly voice of warning, lest the next message brought you convey the appalling tidings—too late—the door is shut—heaven is lost—your doom is sealed. Blessed be God, these are not the tidings he commands to be published to you at present. His commission runs: “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” “The obedient shall eat the good of the land, and have an inheritance among the children.” But you have not yet obeyed; you have not yet believed on Christ to the salvation of your souls. Poor sinners! continue in your present state but a little longer, and, instead of hearing the still small voice inviting to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, you must hear from the judgment-seat of Christ the last tremendous irrevocable sentence: “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” As yet, you may escape; hear from Calvary the voice of love and compassion. All heaven implores you from above, and hell’s deep hopeless wailings are uttered from below;—they reach your ears, and, in accents the most beseeching and im-

perative, call upon you to flee from the wrath to come. O treat them not with levity ; nor let the possibility of your being saved pass by for ever, ere you learn to prize salvation. "The spirit and the bride say, come ; and let him that heareth say, come ; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until your souls have escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler. Take home with you and ponder the language of the Son of God : "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not ; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell ; and great was the fall of it."

LECTURE V.

ON PURGATORY.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON defines Purgatory to be "a place in which souls are supposed to be purged by fire from carnal impurities, before they are received into heaven." This definition is in perfect accordance with the declared opinions of the Church of Rome. The Council of Trent has decreed concerning it : "As the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, from the sacred writings, and the ancient traditions of the fathers, hath taught in its sacred councils—that there is a purgatory, and that the souls confined are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful ; but more especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar ; the holy synod instructs the bishops, that they should pay attention, that the sound doctrine concerning purgatory, as delivered by the holy fathers and the sacred council, be, by the faithful in Christ, believed, held, taught, and every where diligently preached."

In one of their authorized and most popular catechisms it is affirmed, "There is a purgatory fire, in which the souls of the faithful, being tormented for a certain time, are expiated ; that so a passage may be opened for them into the eternal country, into which no defiled thing can enter."

Purgatory, then, according to the doctrine of the Church of Rome, is *a middle state of being* in which souls that depart this life in God's grace, yet not without some stains of guilt, are punished there for their sin, and are kept there for a longer or shorter time that they may be punished before they enter heaven. As to the length of time a soul may be detained there, it has never been decided. It may be for a short time, or for a

thousand years. Priests keep lists of the names of deceased persons which they read out every Sabbath day, and every holiday that mass is said, for the space of a year, after which the names of the dead are struck off from the list, and public prayer ceases to be made for them by name; but this is no certain indication of their deliverance from purgatory.

Nor have they ever decided as to the *precise nature* of purgatorial punishment. Some of their greatest men go the length to affirm, that it is the same fire which torments the damned in hell, and the just in purgatory. None of them have settled *where* the place is. Some speak of it as the dark regions of the air; some, of its being a subterraneous cavern or prison; others, that it is a place on the borders of hell; and others, that it is the very place of torment itself.

But while concerning these matters there is a diversity of opinion, one mind prevails among Papists as to the existence of the place, the persons sent to it, and the purpose to be answered by their being there. It is an article of faith of such primary importance, so necessary to the salvation of the soul, and withal has so much depending upon it, that the authorities of the Romish Church have declared, "That whosoever denies it must be for ever tormented in hell; and to deny this is all one as to deny the being of a God."* It is the righteous that go to purgatory; and they go there to suffer for venial, that is, for pardonable, or little sins, of which they may not have repented before their death; or, it may be they are sent there to be punished for greater sins for which they did not make full satisfaction to divine justice while they were alive.

Those who are good in a superior degree, who die without sin, go directly to glory; the extremely wicked go to misery eternal! All heretics are of this latter description; nothing for them less than immediate and endless woe. But Popish Christians, who are neither very good, nor very bad, are permitted to enter purga-

* "Ut qui illud negat, illum in gehennæ sempiterno incendio cruciandum judicet Belarminus. Et Panigarola non dubitavit negare Deum esse, si purgatorium non sit."—*Dis. De Purg.*

tory to satisfy the justice of God for the sins in which they died.

It is also agreed that the suffrages, or alms, or prayers, of the faithful, and the saying of masses by the priests, have the effect of relieving to a greater or less extent the souls tormented in purgatory. Hence one part of the service of that church is to pray for the souls of the departed. In Popish countries, priests are regularly paid for saying masses for the dead—so much for every mass. Where Papists live among Protestants, such a systematic traffic, were it openly carried on, would expose too much to ridicule. Yet I ask, if, upon the death of a person who has left behind him wealthy relations, the priest does not look for, and usually receive, a present, upon the understanding that prayers for the dead shall be offered up, and masses said to relieve and deliver the departed soul in, and from, the purgatorial fire? If a negative answer be returned, I feel little disposition to argue the point. With or without a fee the *doctrine* is the same. It is the business of Romish priests to make every one over whom they have the least influence, believe that there is a middle state of suffering, and that the sufferings there endured are alleviated and shortened by the suffrages of the faithful; and what are the suffrages of the faithful, if not their prayers and alms? "The estates bequeathed to the church during the eighth century, and, in the language of that age, 'for the redemption of the soul,' or, as 'the price of redemption,' became so considerable, as to place the higher class of churchmen among the most wealthy tenants of the crown." Only judge of the feelings of those who are credulous enough to give heed to the doctrine. They have deceased relations to whom they can still be of some service, yea, of greater service than ever they could be to them when alive. If they choose, they may lessen their pains, yea, shorten their stay in torment. Suppose a case:—

A father has a dear child lately dead. He is told that his soul is burning in a fire, and the more money he gives, the more masses will be said by the priest for him, and the greater the number of masses that are said, the lighter his pain will become, and his soul will be the sooner delivered from the fire of purgatory.

That parent's mind is distressed beyond measure; he is prepared to do, or give, any thing in his power for the speedy rescue of his darling from that horrid place. This is the time for spoliation; as yet all the yearnings of parental affection agonize him. It was but yesterday he tenderly wept over his child in the last struggles of expiring nature, when, had it been in his power, he would gladly have borne the greater part of his sufferings; and will he now, when he believes it to be in his power, forbear to assist, or refuse to part with his silver and gold, to lessen the pain or shorten the punishment of one who is, if possible, dearer to him than even when alive? But priests know nothing about parental affection. They may have plenty of *cousins* and *nephews*; they have no children. Let them take the credit of their so called chastity—at present we dispute it not with them; but we detest their cruelty. What language can describe it! Some apology might be pleaded for a priest who is so sottishly ignorant as to believe that his saying masses can be of the least advantage to the dead; but this hardly comes within the range of possible things, if he be a man of ordinary sense and of a little education. To what then can you ascribe such conduct? It is at once to torture both the living and the dead. Why, if in his power, not deliver the soul in purgatory without delay?—why keep the surviving relative deluded for a moment? Surely, if purgatory there be, the father alluded to, rather than the child, is the sufferer. The cruel disposition of such men is beyond endurance by all but those who believe their wild pretensions, and yield to their extravagant demands.

In countries where Popery prevails, it is common for the priest to say mass immediately before a funeral moves. Having done this, he places a metal plate above the coffin, and begins to bawl out, “Who gives for the soul of the departed?” The persons nearest begin to throw in their offerings. When there is any cessation, he vociferates often and rapidly, “Who will give more for the soul of the faithful departed?” Thus he goes on till the people have given all they intend, or all they have; he then exclaims anew, “Will nobody give more for the soul of the faithful departed? Oh! will no one

give more?” When this pious fraud is completed, he empties all into his own pocket.*

Should the person be very rich, a number of priests are present on the occasion, and employed afterwards in saying masses in the hope of their hire. You will remember that, by saying masses, is meant the continual reiteration of the words, “This is my body,” over a little water and flour. What effect this can have in relieving a departed soul, is not difficult to say. It can do it no harm, neither can it do it any good; but the effect it has upon the living is not so easily calculated, whether you speak of priests or people. So openly is this traffic carried on, that penny-a-week purgatorian societies have been instituted in Dublin, and also in some large cities in this country. This is a fact published to the world both by Protestants and Papists, and which plainly tells the reason of masses being said for the dead.

The plan specified suits the poor; while persons of property have, before their death, impoverished their families by giving their all away to have masses said for their departed souls, and many have impoverished themselves to have masses said for their departed relatives; nor is it wonderful in either case, when the doctrine of purgatory forms an article of their creed. Let them believe this, and the influence of their priests becomes supreme; and this, to say the least, is not harder to believe than Transubstantiation.

The ingenuity of the priests to enrich themselves from this source is worthy of a better cause. They have not only professed to know who are still in purgatory, but have even shown to the people what, they said, were the souls of the departed, either delivered from, or still burning in, the fire. These petty tricks have occasionally been discovered, and published to the shame of those who traded in them. Take one specimen: “A country priest had been complaining grievously against his congregation, for their hard heartedness for not producing a sufficient number of masses for the relief of the souls of their deceased relatives.

* Protestant, vol. II. p. 235.

He invited some of them to come to him at a certain hour of the night, and he would let them see the souls which were in torment, and which called for relief. Some had the courage to accept the invitation; and from a place which overlooked the churchyard, he showed them a number of lights moving about among the grave stones, and declared that these were the souls of persons which were crying from purgatory, for prayers and masses for their release. Some one was bold enough to try to get more intimately acquainted with one of these moving lights, and it turned out to be a crab with a lighted candle-end fixed upon its back! With half a dozen such agents, it was easy for an artful priest to impose upon his whole parish, and to make one who had a friend lately deceased pay his last shilling for his relief, that at least he might be saved from the misery of wandering like a ghost about the grave's mouth." The extraordinary faith of those who listen to the teaching of Popish priests is a phenomenon of its kind, and appears all but beyond belief to those who have not either read much, or seen something, of their strange propensity to believe a lie. But how else could the priests obtain a living, or keep a people around them, if they did not fill their minds with prejudice, and keep their eyes closed against the light of truth. Hence their boisterous outcry against all not within the pale of their own church: all besides are in ignorance and error; while they teach their own people to cling tenaciously to the most glaring absurdities. The story of purgatory, especially, is too good a one for them to part with. It suits their purpose most conveniently. They will not give this up, if they should send the dead popes themselves in that direction, and bring them back again, too, in the shape of the vilest reptiles, or quadrupeds, or even burning in flames. One would naturally suppose, if any individual in existence were privileged to go immediately to the regions of bliss, it would be his Holiness. It is not the case. Upon the death of the *very* pontiff, many masses are said, many prayers offered up even for *his* departed soul.

In one of their own publications, a long account is given of the ceremonies that were gone through after the death not of the late pope, but of his immediate

predecessor. It is a curious document. As soon as the sovereign pontiff expired, one of his cardinals, having assembled the clergy, entered the hall where the corpse lay, and on his knees prayed for the dead pope;—after this, he sprinkled holy water on his body. Day after day for a considerable time masses were unremittingly said for the soul of the dead pope. In every church in the capital, services were performed for him. This was not enough; but as if he had been the greatest profligate, requiring many prayers and masses for the rest of his soul, they were really said and offered in England and other parts. In London, a coffin was prepared to represent the coffin in which his Holiness lay. This was elevated in the chapel; holy water was sprinkled over the hall by the bishops; high Mass was said, and other ceremonies of the kind were attended to, in order that the venial sins of his late Holiness might be atoned for, and that his soul might fly from purgatory to heaven.

If such services are accounted necessary for the pope, what must the people need? To do their work aright, the number of priests would require to be like swarms of locusts. But we have not come to the worst; for after all this expense is laid out, the full amount of ceremonies gone through, and much time spent—it is not certain whether even the pope's soul be purified. He may, after all, be writhing in pain amidst the fires of purgatory. Benedict VII. is reported to have returned riding on a black horse, and to have appeared in this manner to a bishop, a friend of his. The bishop demanded, speaking to the vision, "*What, art thou not pope Benedict that lately died?*" *I am the same*, answered the vision. The bishop then asked, *Father, how dost thou?* *Grievously tormented*, answered the pope, *but I may be relieved; so go, and tell my brother, the present pope, to give the poor the treasure hidden in such a place.* At the same time he appeared to the pope his brother, and said, *I hope I shall be delivered, if Odilus prays for me.*"

Likewise, "Innocent III. appeared after his death, burning in cruel flames, to the holy virgin Lutgarda, and told her that he was to continue so to the end of the world; and for three sins he had deserved to be con-

demned for ever ; but that the glorious mother of God and of mercy favoured him, because he had built a church in honour of her holy and sweet name."

I shall not occupy your time longer by mentioning more of their lying fables and feigned visions, by which they have duped and robbed their silly adherents. It were something tangible, at least in appearance, could the issue be reckoned upon ; but this would not suit the intended purpose, and therefore the whole affair is shrouded in convenient uncertainty. So long as the living are disposed to give for masses, no priest will positively say how many will be required to relieve the departed soul—this would be too condescending—the popes themselves may be tormented in Purgatory till the judgment day ; yea, their prayers for the dead take in all the faithful, as if none had been delivered at all.

Having stated what Papists mean by their middle state, I proceed to mention the origin of the doctrine ; and it must be acknowledged that its antiquity is remote. It originated among heathen nations that had some faint ideas of futurity, and, being destitute of the revelation of heaven, made to themselves an Elysium, or a Tartarus, or a Purgatory, as it suited their fancy. Etna and Vesuvius, with such like volcanic mountains, were by them considered as the receptacles of the souls of wicked men after death ; and to favour the notions they had formed of a futurity, it was storied that this and the other person returned from the invisible world. This may show you how it got interwoven with the system of Popery ; for it has been the unvarying practice of the Church of Rome, in whatever direction she has planted her pestiferous footsteps, and on whatever side her cause has spread, to give the people little disturbance about their old superstitious practices. It has rather been her aim to mingle some of her doctrines with theirs, than root out their erroneous received opinions. "By such steps the patriarchal simplicity of New-Testament worship was wholly discarded ; and a host of ceremonies was introduced from the rituals of almost every nation under heaven." Had Paul been a Papist he would not have spoken as he did on Mar's hill ;* but

* Acts xvii.

to allow them to retain their old religion in part, and in part to receive hers, is the truckling manner of this mother of abominations. Hence the many shades Popery assumes in different countries at the present day. In Scotland, it appears in its very faintest colours—the people are too well informed to endure a full exhibition of its loathsome scenery. It is quite a different thing in Ireland where the darkness still prevails. In France, it assumes a different shade, to suit itself to infidel principles and practices. But both in Ireland and in France the light is advancing, which prevents the thing from coming into play so freely as it does in Spain ; where, from end to end of the land, Popery as yet predominates. From an extract of a letter written lately from Rome, by a physician, to his father in London, you will have some idea of the state of things there. "This morning," says he, "at breakfast, Lord ——— told me that high mass was to be performed at St. Peter's, it being the anniversary of the consecration of the building. I went. The whole ceremony consisted in a number of shockingly idolatrous superstitions, and some beautiful music. Service, as it was called, was performed by the archbishop, who was dressed in the most gorgeous and expensive robes, and wore a magnificent silk mitre, adorned with the most costly jewels. Every body but himself was uncovered ; he, however, wore his mitre as he sat beside the altar, during the whole time, except when he turned to bow to the cross, at which times, one assistant took it off and gave it to a second, after which, a third replaced it. He then perambulated the cathedral, descended to the tomb of St. Peter, knelt before his ashes, and wafted incense about the sarcophagus in which they are contained ; then having kissed the feet of the bronzed statue of the apostle, he returned to his place. Had I been told that the whole ceremony was a concert given to please the archbishop, I could have understood it ; but really I was at a loss to discover any one thing that a person in his right senses could call worshipping the Supreme Being."* This is Popery at head quarters ; but this is

* London Congregational Magazine for Feb. 1834.

not the same thing which is exhibited in heathen countries where it has been introduced by the venturous and indefatigable labours of the Jesuits. We have talked with some intelligent persons from India, and other places, where there are many Papists; but they are so little removed from their idolatrous neighbours, that, except for the name, you could never suppose they professed a different religion. They have great festivals; but they are so like heathen festivals, that they can scarcely be distinguished from them. Instead of spiritual worship, which on these occasions they profess to attend to, confusion and noise, merriment and revelry, abound.*

Now, this cannot be Christianity; for it is consistent throughout. A believer in Jesus Christ may be easily distinguished from an idolater of any grade, and the ordinances of his house may be easily distinguished from every pagan rite. They are the same in every age, in every place, and among every people. It is impossible that the religion of heaven can ever amalgamate with other religions. All must give place to it when entrance is obtained. To no rival, to no copartnership, will it ever stoop. Christ and Belial can have no fellowship.

As to the rise of the doctrine of purgatory, I only remark, that it began to be taken advantage of during the dark ages, when any thing was believed which the popes propagated. They took advantage of this, and professed to hear the groanings of the souls crying for masses, and complaining of the great torment they were

* In Sir Edward Sandy's *Speculum Europæ*, written in 1509, there is given a very correct graphical description of papal policy, which, while it tends to corroborate the above account, shows us also what Popery was at that period. "It affords," he says, "every thing to suit every temper; power for the ambitious, obedience for the humble, employment for the mettlesome, vows for the rash, pardons for the faulty, miracles for the credulous, grandeur for the simple vulgar, prayers for the devout, &c. Who more pompous than cardinals? Wealthier than prelates? Poorer than mendicants? Wiser than Jesuits? More ignorant than mass-priests? More strict on church laws? More lax on divine laws? To eat flesh on Friday, horrible! To profane the Sunday, innocent."—*New Theological Dictionary*, p. 583.

enduring. They even pretended to name the very persons whose fearful groanings they heard, and by this means "drew money from their friends' purses, wheat from their barns, wine from their cellars, and wax from their hives, which were all offered for the relief of the souls in purgatory. Poor women have been known to labour hard, and even to pinch their own stomachs, to give their hard-won earnings to knaves to say masses for their dead husbands or children."

We must now turn to those passages of Scripture which Papists refer to as proofs of this doctrine. They are not numerous, and there is not one of them that has the most distant connexion with the subject, or alludes to it by any ordinary laws of interpretation. It is a token of sad perverseness and audacity to profess to have any sanction from the Word of God for corroborating any such chimera; but even Satan can produce Scripture when he has an end to serve by doing so; and to suit his purpose, will change himself into an angel of light.

The text most frequently brought forward to establish this favourite theory is from the first epistle of Peter: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."* As to the controverted sentences in this sublime portion of Scripture, we would just ask our opponents this simple question, Were paradise and purgatory one place during the short period of our Saviour's body being confined to the tomb of Joseph? If they answer, No;—then we add, the soul of Christ could not be in both places at the same time; but we know what he said to the thief on the cross, and what he said to his Father before giving up the ghost, and therefore we deny that ever the soul of Christ was in hell; for that is the only time that even Papists tell us he was there.†

* Chap. iii. 18.—21.

† Regarding the declaration of our Lord, (Ps. xvi. 10. and Acts ii. 27.), "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," every scholar knows

The words, "By which he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," are very susceptible of an easy and satisfactory explanation. The first thing requisite is to discover the true antecedent to the relative pronoun "which;" and nothing can be more simple or natural than to apply it to what goes immediately before. There is no reason for seeking any other, "Quickened by the Spirit," by which *Spirit* "he went;" then it follows, by which Spirit "he preached unto the spirits in prison." What we now require to find out is, Who preached?—and what answer can be given, but that it was Christ through the instrumentality of Noah. Then, Who were the spirits in prison? Noah's hearers, although disobedient when he addressed them, were not at that time in prison; no, but they were so when Peter wrote. When Noah preached to them they were prisoners in one sense, they were guilty sinners standing in need of salvation,—that salvation they needed was brought nigh to them, and, while this favour continued, they were prisoners of hope. When the flood came and took them away, they became prisoners of another description—prisoners without hope,—to whom the same glad tidings were no more to be published. That the spirits here spoken of can be no other than the antediluvians is manifest; for it is distinctly said, "They were disobedient in the days of Noah." The meaning therefore is, The spirits in prison had their day of visitation—they knew it not, and perished because of their abusing the goodness and long-suffering of God. This is so common in Scripture, that you already anticipate me by reverting to instances of the kind. They are to be found almost every where, and sometimes standing in clusters together.* The former kindness of God to his people, is, times without number, referred to as an encouragement to them under all

that the term rendered "hell," both in Hebrew and Greek, signifies nothing more than *a separate state*. It decides nothing as to its happiness or its misery any more than do the English words, *a separate state of existence*. And though the word hell is now used only for the place of torment, it anciently denoted the concealed place of the dead in general.

* See 1 Cor. x. 5—11.

their difficulties. So his punishing his enemies in past ages, who refused to obey him, is mentioned for the instruction and warning of those who are now disobedient.

The passage under consideration, taken as a whole, teaches us, that the gospel has one Author, whoever may be instrumental in its promulgation;—that the gospel from the beginning has been the same in its nature and design, and always has addressed, and does address, persons of the same description;—that, usually, *much long-suffering* on the part of God has accompanied the preaching of the gospel;—that, when this is not followed by repentance and holiness on the part of the hearers, the divine vengeance will fall heavy upon them, in proportion to the magnitude of the abuse of their privileges, whether these be individuals, families, cities, nations, or, as here, the whole world;—and that, whether God's people be few or many, he knows them, owns them, and will, finally and for ever, save them. Furnished with this simple outline of the passage, I leave you to judge, whether it agrees not better with its literal language than the Popish nonsensical gibberish about purgatory.

As establishing their notion of a middle state, they have also produced the words of the apostle Paul: "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."* For the bare sake of showing that this passage affords no countenance to the idea of a purgatorian fire, it might be sufficient to say, that the gold and the straw pass through the same ordeal; this agrees not with the notion of a purgatory, therefore it can supply no proof of the existence of such a place. But the words are too precious to part with so abruptly. You have here mention made of fire, and a trial by fire; but no allusion to purgatory. The

* 1 Cor. iii. 13—15.

apostle, speaking to the members of the church at Corinth, says at the ninth verse, "Ye are God's building." He proceeds to state what part he had been honoured to take in this great work, and then, in his customary way, points to Christ as the only foundation. Having done so, he cautions all workmen to take heed what materials they build on this foundation; because every man's work shall be tried, and be made manifest by the trial. Fire will do no injury to the precious metals; but fire will consume wood; hay, and stubble. The application of this metaphorical and truly expressive language does not appear to be difficult. Paul and Apollos were ministers by whom the believing Corinthians had been laid, as precious stones, on the sure foundation, Christ. Had they been destitute of the power of godliness, they would have resembled only wood or stubble, whatever name they might bear, or whoever might be their boasted teachers. Nothing short of genuine piety will stand the trial to the last. Stubble may be burnt more speedily than straw, and straw than wood; but the fire will certainly destroy them all. No sooner does any one make a profession of the gospel, than the reality of that profession is put to the test. If not of a proper stamp, then when tribulation arises, because of the word, he will take offence. He resembles the seed upon the rock, which is scorched and withered by the sun; or the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, will choke the word, and discover the lack of true godliness. Will the hypocrite pray always? But, if it is a sterling profession, it will stand to the last, and will, instead of sustaining damage, appear to advantage amidst the hottest trials. The more fiery they become, the more conspicuously will the fruits of righteousness appear to the praise and glory of God; and to him who thus endures, his consolation will abound as his tribulation abounds. That valuable promise will be made good in his experience; "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee."

But independently of the species of trial just stated, the heart-searching doctrines of God's word, and the unvarying testimony they bear in favour of holiness and

in opposition to sin, have often offended hollow insincere professors. "Who," saith the prophet, "may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And I will come near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." We have only to open the New Testament, and read the account there given of Christ's life and preaching, to learn the import of this language. What he said, and the effects of what he said, are its explanation. This truth or that, proved a hard saying to carnal professors. It was the application of the refiner's fire, and the results in many instances were deplorable. Far from coming forth like gold from the trial, many of them were like the wood, the hay, and the stubble—they "went back and walked no more with Jesus."

The discipline of his house, when properly attended to, is followed by similar results. Under it his own people will make advancement. It is salutary to them; but unsubdued lusts, and unsanctified affections, cannot long endure the application of that instrument which would unsparingly curb and lop off every one of them. When the children of God are enabled by his grace to live so as to manifest to all, that they not only hate sin themselves, but that they watch over one another in love, and cannot retain in their fellowship those who return to folly;—the treatment his word directs to, if such backsliders are really unrenewed, proves a test too severe for them to endure, and a Christian profession is abandoned.

Or, should some hypocrites mingle to the end of life among true believers; then shall the floor of Christ be thoroughly cleansed, the tares be separated from the wheat, the chaff from the grain. Should such knock at last for admission, with many loud and reiterated professions of love; it is too late; they acted the part of the foolish virgins, and now must share their doom,—the door is for ever shut against them. They are weighed

in the balances and found wanting. The fire is applied, and it consumes them. Making use of another figure, our Lord strikingly explains this process in the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount.*

But we have not done with this passage. The trial, we are informed, will be *alike to all*; those who engage in the work of the ministry must be tried like others, “even so as by fire.” If watchmen are faithful, they will at least deliver their own souls; but if they fail to give warning, the blood of those who perish will be required at their hand. Should their people resemble gold, silver, and precious stones, they will prove their comfort here, and their crown and joy hereafter; but if they build upon this foundation, admit into Christ’s church improper characters, they must sooner or later suffer loss. Nor is this all; they must be tried themselves—tried by the same test as their people. If genuine believers, they will pass through the trial unhurt; if shepherds of no value, resembling hay or stubble, the fire will no more spare them than others of this description: “He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” According to this interpretation, the meaning is not, as is generally thought, that he shall be saved with great difficulty, even should his work be burned. So far as we know, this is not an idea cherished by God’s word concerning any of his servants or people.† Had not Christ died, it was impossible for a sinner to be saved at all; now that he has died, it is equally impossible for any one who trusts in him to perish. A brand plucked from the burning presents the idea of imminent danger. Every unconverted person is like stubble dried, which nothing can save should fire approach; but every believer is like the imperishable gold, which the fire may refine, but never can destroy. To save gold tried in the fire has nothing like hazard connected with it; so far as the gold is concerned, it is equally safe in the midst of the furnace as before it was cast into it. Just so it will be with all Christ’s jewels; they will never perish. “Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the

net; thou laidest affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.” A far different end awaits the impenitent, whatever their appearance or avocation might be in this world. “Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch;” a warning this which calls for deep consideration from teachers and taught, especially in connexion with the language of the apostle on which we have been commenting—language, let us bear in mind, which must one day meet its accomplishment, to the inexpressible joy or sorrow of every one of us;—but language which is fearfully and forever wrested by Popish priests when they presume to apply any part of it to their doctrine of purgatory.

The words of our Lord, “Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou has paid the uttermost farthing,”* are doted upon by Papists, as if they confirmed beyond controversy their idea of a middle state. But observe, that from a single phrase in a parable, which this is, no just conclusion can be drawn besides what the main drift of the parable itself contains. Were it not for the handle taken of the words of our Saviour, I should think this remark too trite, at any rate unnecessary, as every person accustomed to read is aware of its truth. What would you think were I, or any one, to assure you that new doctrines may be lawfully founded on a solitary sentence in a parable? You would at once meet the assertion with a denial; because you know perfectly that this was never the design of such a sentence in its present connexion. But this, my friends, is the mode of Popish interpretation; and this may satisfy you as to what shifts they will resort to prove a favourite topic.

The divine Redeemer is here showing the dismal end awaiting those who live in enmity one with another, which, in Scripture language, is murder; a sin which

* Matt. vii. 24—27. † 1 Peter iv. 18. applies not here.

* Matt. v. 26.

calls not for the fire of purgatory, but a far other punishment. Besides, were you to draw any argument from this declaration of the nature which Papists do, it would prove too much. It would prove that sinners in the place of misery are getting less in debt by their sufferings, and will entirely be delivered when they have suffered longer, that is, when all their debt is paid by the agony they are enduring. Whereas the obvious meaning is, that, cast into that prison, the possibility of deliverance ceases. The whole parable is founded upon the supposition of a man being cast into prison for debt, from which prison he is not to be rescued till he pay the last farthing. Who needs be told that a prison is not the place to pay debt. The prisoner is shut up from the very possibility of using means to satisfy his creditors. His person is punished in prison; but his purse remains empty. His lying there until he pay all, is equivalent to his lying there for ever. This is a very ill chosen passage for the plea of purgatory. It tells all against it.

The words, "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come,"* have been also cited and claimed as proving this dogma. It is hence urged, that as there is one sin that shall never be forgiven, so there are some sins that shall be forgiven in the next world; which is a conclusion rashly assumed, but by no means fairly deduced from the words. It would be quite out of place to enter at present on a discussion as to what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Suffice it to say, that this life or age, and that life or age, often refer, the one to Old-Testament times, and the other to New-Testament times. Under the former economy, sacrifices were received for less offences, while men were punished by death for greater; but when the gospel dispensation was introduced, a full promise of pardon for all transgressions was tendered to the guilty;—only this blasphemy, whatever it was, could not be forgiven, even under the New-Testament dispensation. How groundless, how impious, to presume, from any

* Matt. xii. 31.

such declaration, that some sins are to be forgiven in an after state of being! Alas, for those who believe it! The Lord give them to see their error before it be too late.

There are a few other Scriptures which they quote as bearing upon the point; but those already mentioned are the chief, and you may judge of the rest by the specimen before you. Indeed, the most consistent Papists abandon Scripture proof entirely, and resort to tradition, dreams, visions, and other such legends of the church, for the discovery of purgatory.

After all that has been advanced, I am quite aware it must have struck you, that little has been said to disprove the doctrine, and but few objections have been stated against it in a positive manner. I have purposely reserved these objections till now, to prevent confusion. It is also my wish to give those who differ from us every justice, by mentioning candidly their tenets before proceeding to overthrow them. Having done so, I go on to the statement of those arguments which tend most directly and effectually to expose the fallacy and pernicious tendency of the doctrine of purgatory.

1. You never read in Scripture of more than two classes of men in this world, or of more than two places in the next, to which the souls of the departed go. There are believers and unbelievers, the just and the unjust, the servants of Christ and the slaves of satan. The first class, at death, go to be with Christ; the second class are banished from his presence. The former are received into glory; the latter are cast into outer darkness. "The wicked are driven away in their wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death."

2. The happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked are uniformly spoken of as taking place *immediately* after death. Jesus assured the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paul longed to depart, that he might be with Christ. Speaking to the Christians at Corinth, he says, "We know that, if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with

our house which is from heaven." In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we are told that, when the rich man died, he lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment; and, when the beggar died, he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. In arguing this point with a Popish priest, this very passage was quoted as bearing against his doctrine. His reply was, "And so you really think that the poor man was cast into hell, for being gorgeously clothed and taking a hearty meal." The answer was accompanied with a sarcastic sneer, bordering on levity, and quite unbecoming the gravity of Scripture. But it is the overthrow of the doctrine to apply Scripture to it at all. Such men know this well, and will, therefore, either waive the topic, or attempt to shock you with an exhibition of their unseasonable mirth, or boisterous wrath.

"Surely," saith David, "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." So, again, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." If these passages mean any thing, they convey an idea of happiness *immediately* after death. The apostle's words settle the question for ever: "The things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal." No interval between seen things and unseen. The person shuts his eyes on time, and opens them in eternity.

3. We are taught from Scripture that, after death, the state of every man is fixed for ever. "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." "*There is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "Corruption" in the former clause, and "life everlasting" in the latter, agree in one thing, duration. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not more certain that men are appointed to die, than that judgment follows death; but what is judgment, if you exclude from it a final decision? The sentence in every case must be favourable or unfavourable; must either be,

"Enter into the joy of your Lord," or, "Take the unprofitable servant, and cast him into outer darkness." From this sentence there is no appeal; it for ever seals the bliss or woe of him upon whom it is pronounced.

4. The entire family of the redeemed are spoken of as being partly in heaven and partly on earth. Taken together these comprise the whole that exist; there is no third division. "I bow upon my knees," says the apostle, "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the *WHOLE* family in heaven and earth is named." There are some here and some there, but none in a middle state. The church triumphant and the church militant, taken together, contain the *WHOLE* family of God.

5. A heavy objection to the doctrine of purgatory, is, that it has the natural tendency of hardening wicked men in their evil course. One would almost be tempted to conclude, that this was its chief design. It has been said, though not by Romish priests, that the more wicked men are, they are the better Papists; because the greater the difficulty in getting them out of purgatory, the greater advantage to the priests. It cannot be denied that so far as wicked men are concerned, the receiving of this tenet will make them more daring and persevering in their rebellion; while there is nothing in the system to lead them to amendment. He who believes that whatever his wickedness may be, and whatever punishment that wickedness may in justice demand; yet, by the liberality of his friends, masses will be said for him which will at once mitigate his sufferings and abridge the term of their duration, will not be very scrupulous about the commission of sin. If any thing can, this must make such a person easy, yea, determined to abide in his old course. He sleeps secure, and leaves the work of expiation in the hands of others. He takes his fill of iniquity; what though he should suffer for a time in purgatory! While you must bewail it, you cannot help perceiving that, upon every mind not in love with the truth, this is the natural result of the delusion.

6. To the people of God, on the other hand, it presents the most cheerless aspect. To them it throws a gloom around death, deep, dark, and dreary. How are

they to judge of the character of that God in whom they have trusted for the victory over the last enemy, if, instead of granting them this, they must be doomed for years, perhaps for ages, to a place of separation from the land of bliss! yea, doomed to a place of punishment where they themselves must satisfy offended justice for their venial sins! Tell me, how is it possible for one in the prospect of a thousand, or ten thousand, years' abode amidst burning fire to walk through the valley and shadow of death without fearing evil? Say, how could he believe the doctrine that neither death nor life can separate from the love of God? or rejoice in the view of death? or, in what possible sense could it be said, that the latter end of such a one was peace? In our estimation, the idea is calculated to overwhelm him in sorrow, to bind him in bondage all the days of his life, and to writhe his very soul in agony upon the approach of death. But this is not in harmony with the peaceful precious gospel of Christ which brings to light life and immortality; whose cheering torch illumines the vale of death, and distinctly shows that there exists no dread chasm between it and the blessedness of heaven.

7. By this vile doctrine of purgatory, the most unscriptural views of the evil nature and awful consequences of sin are exhibited. There is no such distinction made in the Word of God as that which the Church of Rome makes. She speaks of venial and mortal sin; but God always speaks of sin as an enormous evil, richly meriting death as its wages. Whether it be original or actual sin; whether it be committed in thought, word, or deed, the verdict of heaven against it is death. Sin, of whatever kind, aims at nothing less than the overthrow of the divine government. It is a breach of the holy law, and highly dishonouring to the Lawgiver. It is that abominable thing which his soul hateth, which no human sacrifices, however great, or however often repeated, can have the very least tendency to expiate. In these, one and all, there is no approach to expiation for sin committed against God. The prophet asks, "Wherewithal shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with

burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?" Here the question is fully put; but in the whole there is found no equivalent for the sin committed. Sin is an enormous, an infinite evil, to which no sacrifice man can make bears the slightest proportion, if you speak of making atonement. Human sufferings, to any extent, can never have the effect of removing the filthy stains from the soul which sin has made, or of satisfying the offended justice of God. No truths in Scripture are more clearly elicited than these; yet, in opposition to them, Papists affirm that, by the sufferings endured in purgatory, expiation is made for the sins in which the person died; and that the alms and prayers of the living tend to the mitigating and shortening of these torments. Hear it, my friends, hear it with patience if you can:—A certain degree of suffering, added to a certain number of masses, will cleanse the soul from those stains by which it is defiled in the sight of God. What do you say to this?—Lies, abomination, and blasphemy;—but this is Popery. Papists never deny this tenet. O our souls, come not ye into their secret; unto their assembly, our honour, be not thou united!

And what is worst of all,

8. This cursed doctrine sullies and destroys the efficacy of Christ's atonement, and the fullness and freeness of his rich grace. That such is its necessary tendency needs no proof; the thing is evident. If the doctrine of purgatory be true, Christ has died in vain. All objections compared with this dwindle into insignificance. What are they all put in the balance with it? You inquire about the working of this system; see it now before you in full operation, plying with all its might to assist Satan and destroy Jesus. It requires no strong reasoning to show that, if a certain extent of suffering by the transgressor can atone for certain faults committed against God, a longer and more intense degree of suffering may of course atone for more aggravated faults, and so on, till all the sins he ever committed be

engrossed in the catalogue, and all the atonement they ever demanded be made by the transgressor himself. Or, if a certain number of masses can alleviate and shorten pain for some trespasses, a greater number of masses may alleviate and shorten pain for other trespasses; and by this mode of procedure the crown is torn from the head of Emmanuel, and placed alternately upon the head of the sinner and of his wily wicked priest. But no atonement ever has been, or can be, made besides Christ's. He is the propitiation for our sins. He suffered the just for the unjust. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. To this agrees the song of the redeemed in heaven; "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." To talk then of torments in purgatory being necessary after what the Lord of glory has accomplished, is to condemn God and contradict him to his face. "Who shall lay ANY THING to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died." Here is firm footing for eternity, and upon this ground all true believers take their stand. But the scheme of purgatory treats the glorious work of Jesus as a thing of nought, and professes, independently of his suffering, obedience, and death, to make the transgressor, with the help of other transgressors, satisfy divine justice for all his venial offences.

Many, now-a-days, look upon Popery as a harmless sort of thing. This arises from a misplaced charity, or from too partial an acquaintance with the lies it propagates, and the tendency of these lies. It is harmless, if the overturning of the way of salvation through Christ be not worth minding; but, if there is any value in the obedience he paid and in the blood he shed; if it is only in him we have redemption, and through his blood the forgiveness of sin, then Popery is not a wart or a wen, that may disfigure without destroying the system, but a loathsome incurable cancer, a pest, and a gangrene. Talk no more of it as a thing which may exist without doing injury, or as a thing that may pros-

per in unison with the cause of God; be assured, as the one advances the other must decline. Christ and Popery can have no fellowship. He seeks to deceive, in order to save; the aim of Popery is to deceive, in order to ruin. To tell a man that he is too good to be lost, yet not good enough to be saved, is strange;—to teach him that masses said for his soul will be of service to him after he has left this world, is preposterous;—and to talk of the sufferings of the soul, in a middle state, giving satisfaction to offended justice, is to pronounce the richest exhibition of the love and mercy of God towards fallen sinners as a mere uncalled-for waste. The doctrine is horribly impious, and excites disgust and shuddering in every breast, in which there yet lingers one vestige of love to the Lamb of God.

I have done with it; and shall close with a word of improvement. You have no faith in a middle state; be admonished, then, to act in character as those who believe that there is *only a heaven and a hell*, and a *whole eternity* of either the one or the other to every immortal soul. This is the doctrine which accords with truth; but, O! what importance attaches to it! Are we all on the verge of a state of bliss or woe?—of an endless state of consummate happiness or misery? The very day we leave this world, are we received for ever and for ever into the glorious mansions on high? or are we, for the same endless for ever, plunged into the bottomless abyss of unutterable anguish? And with this certain prospect of a fixed state of existence before us, have we no lease of life, no day beyond the present we can reckon upon? Is it probable that this year, this night, our souls may be required of us? Then, my dear friends, are we ready for the change? would death be our gain? and, in the judgment, would we not be condemned? Are we justified by faith, and purged from sin? We have no hope of being purified in another world. There is no fountain needed for sin in heaven; there is no fountain opened for sin in hell. Have we, then, been all washed in the blood of the atonement? We have access to it only in this world, and have we taken due advantage of the distinguished pri-

vilege? are we resting wholly for acceptance before God on the finished work of Christ? Since we know it is in vain to call him Lord, Lord, without doing the things which he commands, are we walking in all his ordinances and commandments blameless? Let us, before the Searcher of hearts, ponder these things more seriously than we have done; and let us count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord—forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If there be present those who profess to believe in the atonement and intercession of Christ, yet never apply to him;—who profess to believe that nothing which defiles can enter into heaven, and that everlasting misery abides those who live in sin; yet, after all, forsake not their evil course; with much affection and earnest importunity we would once more warn such to flee from impending woe. The clouds are rapidly collecting, the storm is ready to burst upon you, O ye transgressors. Escape for your life, ere the thunderbolts of wrath hurry you hence beyond that gulph which separates heaven from hell—that great gulph which you never could repass. In the name of that Jesus who died for the guilty, we most urgently beseech you to be reconciled to God. There is no time for trifling or delay: “Christ’s fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” “Now, therefore, be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.” Put not away from you words whereby you may be saved; abuse mercy no longer; hear the language of divine compassion, and yield to the Saviour’s call. “Behold,” saith Christ, “I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” But the impenitent will not always be thus dealt with: “God is angry with the

wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death.” “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.” “He that, being often reprov’d, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” These things, you say, are awful, but they lie all in the distance. It is because they are future that there is hope concerning you; they are future, and therefore you this night hear the imploring voice of mercy. Listen to her tender accents; the things you speak of as at a distance will soon overtake the disobedient, and what is now future and little dreaded by them will in a little while be spoken of as having come to pass. “Hear ye *that are* afar off, what I have done; and ye *that are* near acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” “When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

From this subject let God’s people learn to press forward with renewed strength. Let them never harbour the idea of disappointment from the faithful Saviour who himself entreats and cheers them. “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.” He who hath given grace, will also give glory. He often reminds his people of his certain and speedy approach, “Lo, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.” “Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” “Be

not afraid; nothing shall ever separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, can do so;—"for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

LECTURE VI.

ON THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE announcement of *seven* sacraments brings forcibly to our recollection a portion of the book of Proverbs; "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." In one respect the commission of Christ to his apostles had no limits, the world was the field of labour; but they were restricted as to what they were to teach. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU." They were not permitted to swerve from this rule. So we find them, and those whom they countenanced, going forth every where preaching repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. When this testimony was rejected, they had nothing beyond it to inculcate—here their mission closed; but when any received it as from God, they proceeded to instruct them concerning the ordinances and commandments of the Lord Jesus. If, in any city or district, a sufficient number of renewed persons were found, they organized them into a church, and set all things in order, that the believers might in a public as well as private capacity attend to whatever their heavenly Master had enjoined. Thus united, they became like a city set upon a hill—the word sounded out from among them to all the surrounding regions; and acknowledging no authority but Christ's, they sought to please him in all things.

Popish priests adopt a very different method from the apostles. Should a people say to them, We believe in Christ,

and desire to be taught his will; they would soon in one shape or other tell that people, that faith in Christ and obedience to *his* will, are nothing at all, unless they also believe in the supremacy of the pope of Rome, in the infallibility of the Church of Rome, in her purgatory and seven sacraments, with a host of additions. If that people should have the courage or audacity to object to these things as innovations, or doubt of their truth; they would assure them in no doubtful terms, that, if they only be pliant enough, and commit all into their hands, they will be responsible for the consequences. If still that inquiring people should insinuate, But we hear that many have for very weighty reasons objected to your religion as having no foundation in the Word of God; they would be told without ceremony, That all who speak against the Holy Catholic Church to which they belong, are liars, heretics, and accursed;—and that there is no salvation for any man without her pale. In short, Bow your necks, and receive the yoke, without more ado.

In nothing has the Church of Rome erred more widely from the truth than in her sacraments. But in order to understand this, it is necessary to know and comprehend accurately what she means by a sacrament. Although the term sacrament is not of scriptural origin, yet it is a word commonly used in this land to express baptism and the Lord's supper, and almost every child knows that in both these ordinances the symbols used are such as the Head of the church has commanded; namely, water in baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's supper. These symbols are expressive representations of the blessings which flow from Christ to believers; this is precisely what might have been expected, and is quite within the reach of every ordinary capacity. But this is not a sacrament according to the language of the Church of Rome; for, in her canons, it is declared that they are accursed who “assert that the sacraments do not contain THE GRACE which they represent, and they even confer the grace itself on those who place no obstructions” to prevent the receiving of it. Again, “If any one shall affirm that by the sacraments themselves, from the performance of the work, grace is not conferred, but that faith only in the divine promise

is sufficient to the obtaining of grace, he is accursed.” Perhaps some of my hearers may not comprehend the full import of such language; I shall therefore select for explanation the ordinance of baptism. The Church of Rome calls baptism “the sacrament of regeneration—because by baptism, the man is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, and becomes an adopted son of God.” This is her definition of the ordinance, and she says the effects of it are, that “all sin, original and actual, however vile, obtains remission.” Now, divine revelation does not insinuate, far less substantiate, any such views. That baptism, especially in adults, might *represent* regeneration is freely granted; but so far from its being the very grace of regeneration, their obedience to this initiatory ordinance is nothing more than the evidence of their previous regeneration. They believed and were baptized. Faith in Christ, or regeneration, preceded their attending to this ordinance. But in the oracles of Rome you find that baptism is not the *representation* of the washing away of sin, or of regeneration, but is the *very thing itself*; baptism is actually the washing away of sin, and is, or conveys, the very grace of regeneration. There is a great deal of sophistry here, and I am anxious you should see through it at the outset; otherwise it is impossible to perceive the enormous evil which lurks under each of the seven sacraments.

Again, the Church of Rome maintains that, the whole merit, or essence, of the sacraments consists, not in the spirit or feelings of the recipient, but in the *intention* of the priest who administers them. However fraught with mischief this part of their creed may be, there is no difficulty in coming at its meaning and design. It is to exalt the priesthood, if it should be at the expense of nullifying all sacraments at once, which this sentiment does with a vengeance. Observe it; however sincerely any one may prostrate himself before God, or whatever may be his love to, or faith in, the Redeemer while observing his appointments; still it may be no sacrament, because the benefit of the sacrament *depends entirely upon the intention of the priest who administers it*, and no partaker can possibly say what his *intention* is. “The assertion,” says Maturin, “is so monstrous,

so pregnant with consequences of mischief and horror, ineffable in their degree, and indefinite in their extent, that while I speak, I actually pause to ponder over the mystery of iniquity developed in them. It signifies briefly this, that however we prostrate ourselves before the altar of God, with hearts burning with love to him, and faith to the Redeemer—however we partake of the memorials of his death, with ever such zeal, intensity, and solemnity—however we feel the sentiment of devotion ever so profoundly, and embody that sentiment in an external rite ever so visibly before God and man—still it may be *no sacrament*; for the benefit of the sacrament depends, not on us, but the intention of the priest who administers it.”

Then there is the number of *seven* settled upon by the Church of Rome. When was this? or by whom? For centuries that church, like other churches to the present day, had but the two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's supper. By and by, instead of two, she contrives to have three sacraments, then a fourth is added, until at length, by the Council of Trent, the number was fixed upon and *decreed* to be seven. It seems a smaller number was found not to suit all her purposes, and having at length pitched on the number seven, it began to be noised abroad every where as the most famous of all numbers. True, it is frequently used in Scripture. We read of a great many sevens; but we have also a great many ones, twos, twelves, and other definite numbers often mentioned. Should any person's curiosity lead him farther into this question, he has only to take his Concordance and look at the different numerals. After having done so, he will naturally enough ask, Why did not the Church of Rome increase her sacraments to twelve? or, to the number of David's worthies? or, to that famous number twelve thousand? Whenever we exceed the number Christ settled, it matters little where we stop, or how far we go. It holds good in this case, as it did in another, when God commanded Moses to make all things according to the pattern shown him. His doing so, manifested his regard for divine authority; his adding, altering, or diminishing, would have shown his contempt of it.

An extraordinary fact regarding this said number *seven*, is, that while the church that has fixed on this

number has no authority for doing so, nor reason for doing so, but her own caprice; yet such is the value and importance she attaches to *seven*, that, in her usual style, all are everlastingly accursed who believe not in that very number of sacraments.

Let us proceed to the examination of the things themselves. Their names are—1. The Eucharist. 2. Baptism. 3. Confirmation. 4. Matrimony. 5. Orders. 6. Penance. And, 7. Extreme Unction.

1. With regard to the sacrament of the *Eucharist*, or Transubstantiation, from the prominence it holds in the religion of Popery, it has been treated separately from the rest. Upon mature reflection, I have only to say that, were I called to deliver that discourse a second time, I should feel inclined rather to enlarge than abbreviate. We shall, however, say nothing more at present of its flagrant violation of every thing sacred, and of its tendency only to do immense injury; but proceed to the consideration of the second in order;—

2. *Baptism*.—The sentiment which Papists hold regarding this sacrament, is, That every infant which dies without baptism, “can have no share in Christ, cannot be delivered from original sin, and must inevitably perish.” Were it possible to believe it, how revolting such a doctrine! How terrible to the feelings of Christian parents! We have heard of a minister who became in principle and profession a Universalist, and preached the doctrine of universal redemption for many years; because his mother, whom he doted on and loved, if possible, to excess, died and left him, without giving evidence of her faith in Christ. The very possibility of her being in torment, to whom his affections were so strongly bound, is said to have agonized his mind to such a degree, that he could find no relief but in turning round completely and maintaining that all are saved without exception. This was error, to believe that none perish, in order to dispel the fear of one's having perished. He should have remembered that secret things belong to God, and have quietly left all in his hand who does nothing wrong, and in whose government there is no mistake. While you may bewail the blunder of such a man, there is a something about him you know not well how to find fault with; but

with this horrid doctrine, which sweeps every unbaptized infant into the place of misery, we can have no sympathy. It is, blessed be God, as repugnant to the spirit and letter of his law, as to all proper feelings. We view it as a specimen of the wisdom and mercy of Popery, and shrink from it with abhorrence. When God explained to Jonah the reasons for his not destroying Nineveh, one of them was, that in it were "more than six score thousand persons, that could not discern their right hand from their left." These were children, and partly for their sakes was the city spared. This was divine compassion. The true Shepherd of souls was much displeased with the disciples for discouraging the approach of little children to him, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." He said, on another occasion, "Their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." "Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children?" This is one of God's questions to a rebellious people, and in putting it he claims the children as his own; "thou hast slain my children." To make them pass through the fire, was to destroy their bodies, nothing more; this was tender mercy, compared with the passing of a sentence of condemnation upon their souls.

Yet this much is to be said, that Papists are not scrupulous in the choice of a baptizer. It matters not that Christ has connected the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom with the dispensing of this ordinance; the Romish Church says that any one, man, woman, or child, may administer this sacrament in case of danger of death.* If a priest cannot be had, any one may do it, man or woman, Catholic or heretic. At the same time, a man is to be preferred to a woman, and a Catholic to a heretic; but if the child is in the agonies of death, the baptism is held valid, administer it who may. Let this human contrivance, this Popish provision for the sake of children, be connected for a moment in your minds with the spiritual nature of Christ's

* Key of Heaven, p. 369.

gospel, and the gracious character of our heavenly Father, and say what agreement you discover. Can you, not to go higher, can you even reconcile it with common sense, that a few external ceremonies have really the virtue of saving a spiritual existence, a *soul* from death?—that an infant that never did good, neither did evil, must, *but for these ceremonies*, everlastingly perish? It cannot be. That God, in justice, might deny children entrance into heaven, is not the question; but that pouring water three times on its face, saying a few words, and doing a few things, all of which may be said and done by any person in a few minutes, should keep that child's soul from eternal burnings, is so glaringly erroneous, that one feels ashamed for the debasement of mind which can stoop to entertain such a doctrine. But Romanists are taught to believe that baptism washes away original sin, remits all actual sin, adopts into the family of God, and gives a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. These are high-sounding extravagant terms, not destitute of meaning, but without any application here. It is a union to Christ; it is the application of his blood by the Holy Spirit, to young or old, that can accomplish these things—they are too great for other agency. Of baptism it may be justly said, as of a similar institution, It is nothing, and the being without it is nothing, but a new creature. He knew well how to appreciate the ordinance we are speaking of, who said, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." In the judgment of Paul, baptism was not unimportant; yet, in his mind, the preaching of the gospel held a primary place. How differently had he spoken and acted, had his views been Popish!

Whatever this mother of abominations touches she pollutes. The ordinance of baptism, as enjoined in the Word of God, has that about it which bespeaks its origin—it is simple, solemn, and expressive. The recipient is to be baptized with water, in (or into) the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and this is the service. It is a very different thing in the Popish Church. The water in the font, in which, or out of which, children are baptized, must be blessed three times a-year. Every child must have a god-

father and god-mother, that is, sponsors, at whom a number of questions are asked by the priest, which being answered, he blows three times upon the face of the child presented for baptism, saying, "Depart out of him, or her, O unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost the Comforter!" Then he makes the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the breast, on the back of the head, and between the shoulders of the child. Its cap is taken off, and its clothes loosed, to let the thing be done to purpose. He blesses salt, and puts some of it into the mouth of the infant, and proceeds, with a show of authority, to cast out the devil, calling him by such names as, "Thou unclean spirit, and thou accursed condemned wretch." The sign of the cross is again made, and having wet his finger with his own spittle, he touches first the ears of the child, and says, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened;" and having gone through much solemn mockery of the same kind, the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," are pronounced, accompanied with three pourings of water in the form of a cross. After this, the devil departs from the person baptized, the Holy Ghost enters, he is adopted into God's family, and is as free from sin as Adam was before he fell.

It is impossible for us just now, nor is it necessary, to enter upon a discussion concerning baptism, in order to show that what we have described is far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ; but I must say, and it is with grief, that the *relics* of Popery remain with some who profess a sounder faith. In the people of God there ought ever, in this as in all their Master's appointments, to be manifested a ready obedience. No unnecessary delay should take place in attending to this ordinance; while, on the other hand, our God will have mercy and not sacrifice. Should children sicken and die before they can with propriety be baptized, this is the hand of God; and those who have faith in him will cease and say, "The will of the Lord be done." And when they are permitted in his providence to present their offspring for baptism, let them never forget that yoke of bondage from which God has delivered them, and that glorious liberty wherewith Christ has made

them free. It is a season that calls for renewed gratitude, and that requires fresh supplies of grace. Let them trust only in God for their own and their children's salvation. This confidence will not lead to a slighting of the ordinance of heaven; but it will lead to look far above and beyond human aid, and to seek for other application than that of water to the body, or of the breath of any mortal man blown thrice or three thousand times into the face of a child. To put blessed salt in its mouth, and to hold a blessed candle before it, expressive of grace and illumination, are vain ceremonies, the very origin of which Papists themselves can give no account of; and to imitate the Son of God, in saying, "Ephphatha, Be opened," can be viewed in no gentler a light than as a piece of impious presumption.

In mentioning the *relics* of Popery which some still retain, I allude particularly to any unwarrantable anxiety manifested to get sickly infants baptized, and to the unhallowed feelings which some harbour towards unbaptized infants. It is a shame to countenance the Church of Rome in such a manner. Let the effects of her teaching be completely erased, and the vestiges of her tutorage get no shelter for an hour; yea, let her name and remembrance perish! I knew a serious individual who was terribly tried, owing to the existence of Popish opinions regarding little children. A few hours after the birth of a lovely boy, his beloved partner died. As soon as the first paroxysms of grief subsided, his great concern was to secure a nurse for his baby. A nurse was got, one every way suitable; only, the child she would not touch, nor permit to be carried to her house, until he was baptized. This was barbarous—it was Popery.

3. Let us glance at the sacrament of *Confirmation*, by which, according to the Romish Church, the faithful receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the hands of the bishop and prayer, accompanied with the anointing of their foreheads with holy chrism, that is, a mixture of oil olive and balm of Gilead, in the form of a cross. Sometimes infants are confirmed; but, ordinarily, this sacrament is not administered till the persons are come to the use of reason. It is, say they, not to be repeated, because it imprints a spiritual mark

on the soul, which always remains. It also communicates the Holy Ghost with all his gifts, and fortifies the soul against all visible and invisible enemies. What wonder-working things the sacraments of this church are! Who would not be a Roman Catholic!!

In applying the chrism, or mixture of oil olive and balm of Gilead, the bishop pronounces the following words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He afterwards gives the confirmed person a slight blow on the cheek. The oil signifies the clearness of a good conscience; the balm, the savour of a good reputation; the form of the cross on the forehead is to arm against worldly shame; and the blow on the cheek teaches that from this time forward the person who receives it is to be ready to suffer patiently all kinds of affronts or injuries for his faith. Is all this done in jest or in earnest? * Howbeit, such is the sacrament of confirmation, and such is the Romish account of it. The next thing to be asked is, Where is there any authority from the Word of God for all this? The Papal Church earnestly contends that it is essential to a *true sacrament* that it be instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; and yet, in this instance, at least, she is forced to confess that he never instituted the sacrament of confirmation, and that there is nothing like it even spoken of by him during all the time of his abode among men. The silence must be total, indeed, when this is her own confession.† In the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles, there are a few passages which speak of the apostles' laying hands on some persons, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; and, having done so, miraculous gifts were imparted. Those upon whom they laid their hands spoke with tongues and prophesied; but this was no sacrament, nor was there a law given for others to practise it. The person whom the bishop

confirms feels nothing; nor is he secured against falling into sin; nor is he, if you restrict the confirmation to any good thing, one whit more confirmed than he was before. I leave you to judge whether it ought more to be attributed to weakness or to wickedness, to mimic the actions of inspired men, long after miraculous gifts have ceased to be bestowed; for it really is, as an ancient writer remarks, "An audacious apish imitation of miraculous operations by the apostles' hands." Men who can be guilty of doing so, while quite conscious that they have no more power to impart gifts than you or I have, must, however you choose to account for it, having something about them egregiously wrong, and alarmingly dangerous. They pronounce all accursed who receive not as an ordinance of God, what God never appointed to be so. After this, what will they not dare!

4. The next sacrament in order is *Matrimony*, or marriage. All agree that it is an ancient and divine statute for a man to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife. This is the appointment of God, and the gospel states the reciprocal duties that devolve on those who are united in wedlock. But this was not a new law when Christ appeared in the flesh: it was instituted in paradise, ere yet sin had sullied the face of this world, or entered with its train of countless evils.

An acute writer asks most rationally in reference to this, "If marriage be a sacrament, why not seventy instead of seven sacraments? Seeing every contract between master and servant, between king and subject, between man and man, may with equal propriety with matrimony be called a sacrament." The only solution is, the church says there are seven, and there must be seven. There is no getting popish adherents out of reasoning in a circle.

In her published laws, the Church of Rome declares that nothing can dissolve marriage but death; and surely what God hath joined, man may not put asunder: but then she does not adhere to this law, except in so far as suits her own purpose. It is within the recollection of many of you, when "the pope himself pronounced the sentence of divorce between the late Emperor of France and Josephine his first wife, to enable him to marry the

* "Ridiculum esset, nisi quod in re seria ludere nefas."

† "Nonnulli, ut Alexander de Ales et Bonaventura, ingenue professi sunt; hoc sacramentum neque a Christo, neque ab apostolis institutum, sed ab Ecclesia in Consilio Meldensi," &c.—*Dis. de Quinque Falsis Sacram.*

daughter of the Emperor of Germany." In this case Josephine had been guilty of no misdemeanor; as the wife of Napoleon Buonaparte, no shadow of blame was ever attached to her character; but the pope at his pleasure gave a dispensation. The doctrine of the church is, that no divorce can annul a marriage, and yet her own extorted divorce, by the pope's authority, has done so. But this is not all.

Marriage, like other sacraments, confers grace on the worthy receivers, and why should it form an exception? The man is pronounced accursed who denies that Christ instituted marriage, or who denies that marriage confers grace. The Church of Rome is like Judas Iscariot. He delighted in cursing, and so does she. If it were the most trifling matters, say the external dress of a priest, she pronounces the man accursed who looks even on this as a minor point. But matrimony confers grace;—alas, then, for the poor priesthood condemned to celibacy! The grace this sacrament confers can never be conferred on priests. It is a novel sight to find them in the rear. Patience, my friends, these men will right themselves. Matrimony confers grace, so says the church: notwithstanding, on a life of celibacy she pronounces the highest eulogiums. Hear what she says: "It is far more acceptable to God than that of marriage." Try to reconcile these two tenets; they are not merely opposed to divine revelation—they flatly contradict each other. Those who violate truth are not unfrequently caught in a similar snare. Who can help observing how exactly the Holy Spirit has delineated the man of sin: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving."

Before leaving this topic, I must remark, that there is one thing connected with it in which we so far agree with the Church of Rome. She hesitates not to declare, nor do we, that the most pernicious results have issued from Protestants and Papists intermarrying. This must appear quite obvious to the most superficial observer; because a complete abandonment of principle, of necessity, takes place on the one side or the other, before there can be concord. It is no ordinary difference which exists between the parties; nor is it that sort of thing

which may be conceded without injury, or retained without the loss of harmony. Where a union has already taken place, it cannot be broken; or, where the Lord may have brought one of the parties to himself since the formation of that union, he furnishes with counsel and encouragement; but let young persons beware of plunging themselves into a lifetime of trial and distress without giving the subject due consideration, or taking proper advice concerning so important a step. By such intermarriages Popery has increased more both in England and in Scotland than by any other means whatever.

5. We now come to the sacrament of *Holy Orders*. After the person has passed through a number of steps from the lowest office, which is door-keeper, till he reaches the priesthood, the bishop, in dispensing the sacrament of holy orders, that is, the setting of him apart to the priesthood, puts into his hand the cup and the bread, saying, "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God." At the end of the mass, the bishop lays his hand upon him again, and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins thou shalt forgive, they are forgiven; and whose soever sins thou shalt retain, they are retained." The sacrament of orders confers two separate boons, each of which is plainly superhuman; but this is of no consequence at all that the things are impossible, the sacrament confers them, and there it rests. The boons are, the power of offering sacrifice to God, and the power of forgiving sins.* Turn up any of their own books that treat of this sacrament, and read for yourselves. There is no need to overstrain the language, and it requires but little pains to interpret it. You cannot receive the impious imposture, but you see at once what it pretends to.

The very term *priest*, under the New-Testament dispensation, is applicable only to Christ Jesus, the great high Priest of our profession. Those who bore this name before his coming into the world, were typical persons, even as the sacrifices they offered were typical sacrifices. What I mean is, that the *office* they held

* "Accipe potestatem remittendi peccata," etc.

and the *work* they attended to were alike typical. After Jesus had made an end of sin by the offering of himself, the name of priest and the office of priesthood ceased to apply to any other but himself. You never hear of apostles, evangelists, or pastors called by this name: it did not belong to them, and they did not assume it: the Church of Rome does; nor does she stop with this extravagance, but has added to it numberless other orders the very names of which are nowhere found in Scripture at all, such as, of abbots, priors, monks, and a host of others; yet with all these dregs, believe her, and she is the only Catholic, the only Scriptural Church on earth.

6. The sacrament of *Penance* will require from you a little more patience, as it stretches its baleful effects on every hand, and to the very extremities of the system. Justly are the errors of Popery called "deadly errors;" but if this applies in general, it applies with peculiar force to this sacrament. Let us hear what that church says about it; this will best enable us to judge for ourselves. We are informed, it is an institution of Christ by which sins are forgiven which are committed after baptism;—that it consists of three things, contrition, confession, and satisfaction;—that the faithful are absolved from their sins by the servants of God, that is, by the priests;—that God has given them power to absolve repenting sinners;—and the person about to be absolved kneels down at one side of the priest at the confession-chair, and says, "Pray, father, give me your blessing." Then the priest blesses him, and afterwards the person begins to confess his sins, and the circumstances which attended their commission, without keeping back any part; for if he confesses not all, so far as he remembers, however foul the deed, however and wherever committed, with all the minute particulars of each case, his confession is worth nothing, and every pardon given is worth nothing.* The priest insists upon the whole discovery of the thoughts, and scruples not to assert that, while he sits in the confession-chair, *he is the same as God*—quotes, should he observe any

thing like hesitancy, the case of Ananias and Sapphira lying not to man but to the Holy Ghost; and by this wickedness prompts to the revealing of what he has no right to pry into, and for the accomplishment of purposes which I profess not to name. "Corrupt priests," says Bishop Burnet, "will find their account in dispensing this great power, so as to serve their own ends. They will know all people's tempers and secrets: and how strict however they make the seal of confession, to draw the world to trust to it; yet, in bodies so knit together as communities and orders are, it is not possible to know what use they may make of this. Still they know all themselves, and see into the weakness, the passions, and appetites of their people. This must often be a great snare to them, especially in the supposition that cannot be denied to hold generally true, of their being bad men themselves. Great advantages are hereby given to infuse fears and scruples into the people's minds, who, being in their tenderest minutes, will be very much swayed and wrought on by them. A bad priest knows by this whom he may tempt to any sort of sin."* "If auricular confession," says Mr. Bradley, a convert from Popery, "be at all times conducted as it was when I engaged in it, I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider it one of the most abominable and corrupting institutions of Popery.—To say a single word in explanation of the questions which a father confessor will propose to a young man or a young woman, to a husband or a wife, would be to imitate his vile example. You will perceive, at a single glance, that they tend to increase the knowledge of the young and simple in the ways of transgression, and to render vices of the most injurious and disgusting kind familiar to all."†

When the person confessing has finished, the priest states the satisfaction that must be made, and, unless in some extraordinary case which the bishop requires to be consulted about, absolves the person.‡ He is bound to regulate the satisfaction by the greatness or littleness

* Vide Concil. Trident. Sess. XIV. can. 6, 7.

* Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, Art. 25.

† Protestant, vol. II. p. 306.

‡ "Ego te absolvo."

of the sins. If he prescribes what is too small for mortal sins, he, according to the canons of the Council of Trent, is in danger of bringing down the punishment due upon his own head. And what is the satisfaction for sin which he demands? It may be the saying of a great number of pater-nosters, and prayers to the virgin; it may be to travel to the shrine of some saint;—it may be to go round upon their bare knees for fifty, or a hundred, or five hundred times, some holy well or chapel; it may be to fast for so long a time;—or, which in Popish countries is the most common of all, it may be to give a sum of money. All this is to do penance, or give satisfaction to God for sins committed against him; and this penance done, they are ready to commence anew in their former course. Should the priest even do wrong in pardoning sin, or in retaining it—to God he must answer for that; *the sin is pardoned, or retained, as he declares*, which, were it true, “the salvation or the damnation of mankind is put absolutely in the priest’s power.”

In Ireland, groups of poor people assemble round what is called a holy well, some of them drinking the water, some of them washing themselves with it, and others, more seriously engaged, are lacerating their flesh by creeping round and round the well upon their naked knees among rough gravel and sharp stones. If, unsuspected, you can approach these poor deluded persons, which is by no means difficult, and ask them, What is this you are about? With much apparent self-gratulation, and with more than a smile on their countenances, they will reply, “We are washing away our sins here.” Repeat the question, Are you so? The answer will be loudly reiterated, “We are indeed washing away our sins.” Give a hint that they have taken the wrong way—they discover the heresy, and complacency is changed into indignation.—In the immediate neighbourhood of the well, you may witness a little *fair*, women selling gingerbread, young people playing at roly-polly, and great glee prevailing. The people at the *fair* consist, I believe, chiefly of those who have got their sins washed away at the neighbouring well;—and this concludes their sacrament of penance. They are now prepared to begin a new score. Such is the happy result of grow-

ing information, that these wells are becoming less and less frequented. Whenever a glimmering of light penetrates, the priests find it will not do, and this partly accounts for their hatred and growing violence against the circulation of the Scriptures. As the light of truth circulates from town to town, and from cabin to cabin, their hold of the people becomes the weaker.

But we are speaking of penance, a sacrament of utter detestation. It presents what is so presumptive on the part of puny mortals, so hurtful to the souls of those who believe the doctrine, and so disparaging to the honour of the God of salvation,—one feels in entering upon it that he has more to say than he can well rehearse, and that there is a danger, in giving utterance to what he feels, of exhibiting more of the abomination than is absolutely called for. I shall therefore, instead of using my own language, prefer giving an extract from Maturin’s sermons, preached only a few years ago in Dublin. You will agree with me in thinking that it is worth a volume of abuse, or of irrelevant statements. It comes at once to the point, is replete with matter; for pathos and sublimity has seldom been surpassed, and, as he lived and preached in the very midst of Papists, you will not question the humbling, startling facts it contains.

“I proceed,” says he, “to the last of the pretended sacraments of the Church of Rome—not the last in point of order, but the last in the series of examination I have pursued—and here I disclaim—I throw aside all weapons of mortal controversy. I have proved, that in the instance of every other sacrament, the Church of Rome has departed from her own definition of what a sacrament must be—but here, on this point, I charge her not with that departure. I have proved that the Roman Catholic Church, by the mouths of her own accredited teachers, directly contradicts itself; but here I charge her not with that contradiction—no—I have a heavier, a more tremendous charge to make, than either departure from her own dogmas, or contradiction of her own creed. (though these have been fully proved, even by her own divines, whose words I have faithfully quoted this night)—I charge her not only with express contradiction to, but *wilful corruption of the word of God*. Man opposed to man may err, or he may not; but man opposed to God must be wrong, unless he can overcome the Almighty. The only words that the Church of Rome can quote from Scripture, in support of her doctrine of the sacrament of penance—that is, for performing certain actions that inflict pain

on the body, which avail to the forgiveness of sins on the part of the penitent; the only words that she can quote, I say, in support of this monstrous doctrine, that substitutes a few trivial and temporary inflictions for the atonement of Jesus Christ, are these—"repent ye," which they translate, and compel their flock to believe to mean, *do penance*! Now without reference to tradition, fathers, councils, or creeds,—or to any words of man which may be false, and must be fallible—I do charge the Roman Catholic Church, in the face of Christendom—what do I say?—in the face of heaven and earth, with a total, wilful corruption of the Word of God—I charge her with putting forward, in defiance of that word, a flagitious falsehood on all Christendom—imposing on the whole Christian world the *faitez penitence* of the Popish Church for the—"repent ye"—of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I charge them, moreover, with the blood of all those souls who have perished in this deadly delusion and gone down to hell with a lie in their right hand. And to prove this, I ask them, do they, or do they not, understand the words employed by the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament? I can hardly suspect them of ignorance. From the heads of universities—from the professors of divinity down to the schoolboy who can read a chapter of the Greek Testament, all, all must agree that the Greek *μετανοειν* signifies repentance, or that change of mind which takes place in every believer who embraces the religion of Christ—for this word, so emphatic and intelligible, the Roman Catholic Church notoriously substitutes the phrase, *do penance*. Penance! I demand, does the Roman Catholic Church understand the meaning of the original word or not? If she does not, well may I apply to her the words addressed to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"—and well may I add, how dare you assume the office of interpreter of the Word of God, when you cannot, or *will not*, translate a passage that a schoolboy might set you right in?

"But the Roman Catholic Church is not so ignorant; she knows, as well as her most strenuous adversaries, that the words 'repent ye,' and her translation of it, 'do penance,' are as opposite in meaning as light and darkness—truth and falsehood—are in nature. But I have not yet done with their doctrine of penance. It seems to me, that though I dare not wrest, or dare presume to quote the Scriptures, as 'of private interpretation,' it does seem to me, that the Church of Rome has been signally punished, by being permitted to convert this her pretended sacrament into a notorious means of scandalous sin. The Church of Rome, it is well known, allows the *commutation of penance*; that is, that a person shall be allowed to take on himself the penance enjoined on another for the commission of sin; and thus, in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, even in deluded, besotted Ireland, a wealthy offender may bribe, for a trifling

sum, a guiltless pauper to commute with the Almighty for his offences!

"I do not say that is a judgment on the Church of Rome for her monstrous perversion of the Word of God, but I do say, that if ever a perversion of the Word of God was employed to make it at once ridiculous and abominable—this is the chief.

"Thus a mart, a transferable ticket of salvation, is circulated from hand to hand through the Church of Rome to the reproach of Christianity, the mirth of the infidel, and the profit of the Roman Catholic priesthood."

This is a mournful exposure. The rich man hires the poor to suffer for the sin which he himself has been guilty of, as if one sinner could atone for the iniquity of another, as if sin were an article of exchange, like a burden of corn or a bundle of hay. He who can pay for a bearer needs never carry it himself. The rich man having confessed, has penance prescribed—so much money to the priest, and so many times to travel round a well. The priest settled with, he gives a trifle to some poor man to perform his rounds for him, and he enjoys himself as if nothing had been wrong. What must the church be that propagates such doctrine!—in what state the people who believe it!

7. The last of the sacraments is, *Extreme Unction*.—This is administered to the dying. The oil used is the oil of olives, blessed by the bishop. Other preparations gone through, the priest three different times makes the sign of the cross upon the sick person, at the mentioning of the Holy Trinity, and says, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all power of the devil be extinguished in thee, by the laying on of our hands, and the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the saints." Then, dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick person in the form of a cross, upon the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet,* at each anointing making use of this form of

* ——"in oculis, auribus, naribus, ore, et manibus; de integritate autem ejus, etsi non de necessitate, hominibus quidem, in renibus et pedibus; fœminis autem, *in umbilico*."

prayer: "Through this holy unction, and his own most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed with thy sight," and so with the hearing, and the rest. A number of prayers are then addressed, some to God, some to angels, and some to men,—all to protect and save the departing soul. Moreover, a candle is blessed, and lighted, and kept burning during the dying person's agony, to represent the light of faith in which the Christian dies, and the light of glory which he looks for. These candles likewise chase away evil spirits from the chamber of the dying person.

Such is the sacrament of extreme unction. What need can there be for purgatory after this? The two things taken together destroy each other. If purgatory be required for the purifying of the soul, of what use is extreme unction? And, if extreme unction be what it pretends, it nullifies purgatory. But Popery defies sound reasoning. The wilder and more absurd the theories it broaches the better; the merit is the greater in believing them. One hardly knows how to act in exposing extreme unction to the view of people in their senses. It is a mixture of trifling and profanity, exhibited in the most improper place, and in the most unreasonable time—the *chamber of the dying*. Who can be guilty of trifling and profanity in such a place, at such a time? A Popish priest. Who can believe that extreme unction effects what a Popish priest maintains it does? None in their right mind. What! is the arm of Jesus so weakened that he cannot do his work in the absence of such mummary? and are devils such cowards as to crouch and flee at the approach of a lighted candle? Then, there is nothing to fear from them, and as little to hope for from Him. Hear it, my friends; the priests are all so many gods, who have at their will the rebuking of the powers of darkness, and the bestowment of salvation. Let them but mutter, nobody knows what, over a candle, and the devils, terrified, hasten to be off. Let them apply the oil, and lo! the sins of the dying person are instantly remitted; strength is imparted to the soul to bear more easily the illness of the body; and the soul itself is armed against

the attempts of all her spiritual adversaries. When you can believe this, become Papists.*

But what if, after all this, the person should recover? Then, verily, the anointing with oil by the priest has healed the sick. Who can help pitying the dupes of such a system, in which every subsequent rite seems more loathsome than the preceding, and still the call is given, "Come, and I will show thee greater abominations than these." If a scheme could be contrived to ruin souls, this is it. It matters not how a person live, let him but see the priest a little before his death, and he, by his omnipotent fiat, will rectify all.

The Scripture-warrant they plead for this sacrament is the following: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and, if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."† They translate the word read "elders," priests; but every one who can turn up the term‡ in a Greek Lexicon, has it in his power to contradict them. Besides, the whole passage refers unquestionably to the age of miracles; and if, by his word and anointing, the priest fails in removing the bodily distemper, it is worse than a vain show to proceed with the rest of the ceremony. His is a heathen incantation, not a Scripture ordinance. The anointing spoken of by James, was in order to the raising up or healing of the sick. The anointing of the priest is the sacrament of the dying, and is never administered until all hope of their recovery is gone. These two things are as opposite as death and life; yet every Papist must believe they are the same. This extreme unction has been properly termed "extreme superstition, and the last act of fanaticism and credulity."

* "Quatuor effectus hujus sui sacramenti faciunt: 1. Expulsionem reliquiarum ex peccatis remanentium. 2. Sanitatem animæ ad malum pronæ, et pigræ ad bonum. 3. Sanitatem corporis, ubi animæ saluti expediat. 4. Auxilium contra tentationes et dæmonis aggressiones quas homo tum putitur."—*Tolet. Instruct. Sacerd.* lib. vii. cap. 4.

† James v. 14, 15.

‡ Πρεσβυτέρος.

I have thus described as briefly and distinctly as I could, the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome, and shall now conclude by making a few practical remarks on the two last named—the sacraments of penance and extreme unction:—

1. While sin is not to be confessed to a priest, it is to be humbly, sincerely, fully, and with deep contrition, confessed to God. Against him it has been committed, and to him the confession is due. The private offence of one man against another, may to that man be acknowledged: a public offence against the Church of God, may, in order to manifest the reality of the offender's repentance, be publicly confessed; but these things are very different from the regular confession of sin to a priest. If you speak of the manner, extent, or design—in nothing they agree.

But sin has been committed against God, and hence the language of David is befitting every one of us: "I will confess unto the Lord mine iniquities."—"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Wherever the power of true religion is felt, this exercise will follow. The plan, which the prodigal, and the publican, took, will be adopted: "Father, I have sinned against thee;" "God be merciful to me a sinner." Nothing is more certain than that God is offended by the commission of sin: it is a violation of his law, a dishonour to his name, and a contemning of his authority. But we have all sinned; therefore, the most becoming attitude we can take, is prostration in the dust; and the only thing we can do, is to plead guilty before him. Blessed be his name, he permits us thus to come, and thus to bewail sin in his sight. The penitent can find no relief, but in pouring out his heart to God, in mourning over his past transgressions, and seeking that the sins of his youth may not be remembered against him. He lifts up his eyes, and looks on him whom he has pierced: his heart is broken at the sight: sin becomes bitter as wormwood; and yet he feels, what is strange to himself, a happiness he never felt before, a thrill of joy worth ten thousand years of sinful gratification;—it is the blood of Christ applied to the conscience, and whispering, in the sweetest accents, peace to the troubled one.

2. Beware of coming short of this gospel require-

ment, genuine confession for sin. Man is naturally prone to be satisfied with any thing, however superficial, that regards the soul. Talk to him about the vanities of time, and he is serious; speak to him of the realities of eternity, and he has no relish for the tidings. Tell him of earthly honours and preferments, and he listens with eagerness; press upon him the necessity of humiliation of heart before his Creator, and he treats it as a sectarian whim. But is there one present conscious to himself, that, so far from being accustomed to confess sin before God, he has never, no, not for once, attended in earnest to the duty? To no place in the world can he point, where he has in secret bowed down before his Maker; no time can he specify in which he has spent an hour in imploring mercy. This conduct of yours must be indicative of humility or pride, of piety or impiety, of regard to God or disrespect towards him. I ask the question not promiscuously; I put it at once and in earnest to you and not another, Is your conduct that of a Christian or of an Infidel?—You cannot be at a loss. I ask you not to ponder this question in retiring from the house of prayer, or to take an hour's consideration to prevent your returning a rash and erroneous answer. At this moment, where you sit, you are qualified to reply to it; after investigation is not necessary; you know it now. Whatever else your conscience may have excused you in, it accuses you of the wilful crime of restraining prayer before God. You cannot say; you have no sin, or that you have been humbled for sin, or that you have forsaken sin; for, to this solemn hour of your existence, you have lived without God and without Christ—a sinner unwashed and unjustified, and hardened in an evil course. Well do you know that you never proposed the all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?"—and that between you and the God who made you there is no intercourse, no fellowship, you are estranged from him.

Shall I now tell you of the end of such a course? I would rather press upon your attention this one truth, that, notwithstanding all that you have done, there is every encouragement given you to return to God. He has no pleasure in your death. He delights in mercy, and thus addresses the vile; "Come now and let us reason

together, saith the LORD. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." More than this, he hath declared his righteousness, and made it manifest how mercy may flow freely and copiously to the offender. "He," the Lord Jesus, "*was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And still more, after all the provocations wherewith you have provoked him, his language is that of invitation; it is, "Look unto me and be saved." Now, friend, what is your duty? Surely, immediate, hearty, grateful compliance. I had almost said—will you permit me to say it?—That it is more than you are able to stand out longer. Such love, long-suffering, and mercy, may well break down your prejudices, remove your unbelief, and overwhelm you in amazement. O taste and see that God is good. And learn,

3. Death will soon come when the help of fellow-creatures will prove unavailing. Every believer will find the grace of Christ all-sufficient in the trying day. Amidst the fainting of his heart and flesh, in the closing of his eyes for the last time upon all terrestrial objects, his soul is not merely tranquil and resigned—it is the moment of his exultation and triumph. He is made more than a conqueror through Christ that loved him. He passes away from this world of darkness, sin, and death, into the regions of light, holiness, and life.

How miserable, how destitute he, who, in the article of death, needs still, and still cries for, human aid! The mighty waters into which he has entered mock the potency of those in whom he trusted. Their arm cannot reach him; their voice cannot bring him back; still he recedes, and now the film of death hides them from his view for ever.

Precious Christ! none of them that trust in thee shall be desolate; but, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, lo, thine enemies shall perish.

LECTURE VII.

ON THE IDOLATRY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THIS is perhaps the most difficult and intricate subject connected with the development of the Romish religion. However much we may differ from its votaries upon such points as transubstantiation, purgatory, and the infallibility of the church, they continue firmly and professedly to hold them; and however much we may condemn them as profane and unscriptural, they continue to cling to them as sacred and divinely revealed. But here they turn round, boldly face their antagonists, grapple with them in close contact, cry out most bitterly against the charge of idolatry, and struggle hard to prove that they are the worshippers of the true God. In language the most unqualified they condemn idolatry, and in terms the most unequivocal deny that they worship any God besides Jehovah.

Before proceeding to prove that the system of Popery is a system of idolatry, this much is frankly conceded, that many who profess the Popish faith are quite sincere in denying the truth of this charge; but their sincerity is the fruit either of obstinacy or of ignorance. There is one passage of Scripture which, when taken in its connexion, illustrates this, and exhibits most accurately the sad and woful condition of Popish adherents: "They feared the LORD, and served their own gods."*

On account of idolatry, that old and besetting sin, the Samaritans had been carried away captives by the king of Assyria. The original inhabitants being re-

* 2 Kings xvii. 33.

moved, he peopled their land with men from other countries. The Lord sent lions among them, which were annoying and destructive to the new settlers. They conjectured that this judgment befel them because they "knew not the manner of the God of the land." The intelligence was carried to the king of Assyria, who sent one of the priests to teach them how they should fear the Lord. This was a priest of Bethel; in other words, a priest who knew somewhat of the law of God, but at the same time countenanced idol-worship; just as they were accustomed to do in Samaria, from the time Jeroboam erected idols, or calves, to prevent the people from going up to worship at Jerusalem. Before the arrival of this priest, the religion of these poor heathens was purely idolatrous; and, after his arrival, it amounted to nothing more than a mongrel religion, consisting partly of Jewish and partly of heathenish rites. They never forsook the worship of their own gods, but they mingled with it a portion of the external ceremonies which God had taught the children of Israel to observe. Therefore, in some things, they appeared to be Israelites, while their whole hearts were bent upon their idols; and hence the declaration, "They feared the LORD, and served their own gods." Carry this idea along with you, apply it to the case in hand, and you will perceive at once the state of that case. In the Papal Church, there is outwardly a show of reverence for the name and worship of God; while there is substituted in his room a host of idols.

It is necessary to know, and to bear in mind, that, in reference to the doctrine we are now to consider, Papists often attach a double and even a contrary meaning to their own language. In countries truly Popish, this shift is unnecessary, and there is no dispute about the matter; but wherever knowledge circulates, they endeavour to represent the thing in another and more engaging form. Where the people are as destitute of knowledge as their priests wish them to be, they never deny that saints, and angels, and pictures, and relics, are to be worshipped; but when any of their people become intelligent and inquisitive, they then tell them that these images are only *intended to aid* their devo-

tions; and, if still their information increases, and they become dissatisfied, it has been said, and we believe correctly, that, in some instances, the priests have not scrupled to tell persons of this description, that the thing is altogether absurd; but that they have no other way of keeping their people together. You will no doubt infer, that priests who vacillate in this manner are greatly to blame, and so they are; but still it is a proof that their minds are more enlarged than many of their brethren in office, who know nothing but what they have been drilled into mechanically, and sworn to adhere to, by their father professors.

Now, Papists, in such a country as this, are generally instructed in the middle way of it. Their frequent intercourse with Protestants prevents from darkness of mind so very gross as to believe that the images they bow before are God, or that the saints they invoke are of themselves able to save them. The teaching they receive agrees accordingly with this state of things. They would shrink, as you would, from the idea of falling down before a piece of wax made into the form of a lamb, or adoring the relict of a saint; "but, then, instead of abandoning the church which sanctions such abominations, they impudently deny the fact of their existence. They maintain that the faith and worship of their church is the same all the world over, and yet they would be ashamed to worship what is authorized by their religion where it reigns in all its glory."*

We have often thought it would be worth their while, and it is quite within their power, to raise a subscription, in order to defray the travelling expenses of a deputation of *their own number*, who would carefully search, and faithfully report, the result of their researches, in any Popish country. Let them take the nearest, and a few weeks would accomplish the business. There is no doubt as to the issue. They would return with the conviction that our report was true, so far as it went, but that the half was not told them. Popery in France, in Spain, or in Ireland, is very different from what it is in Scotland. We wish the sug-

* Protestant, vol. II. p. 16.

gestion were proposed to them, and that it met a favourable reception. It is meant for their good, although some may treat it with contempt, as the insinuation of heretics.

The idolatry of the Church of Rome takes in three things, namely:

The Invocation of Saints,

The Adoration of the Virgin,—and,

The Superstitious Use of Relics and Images.

In regard to the first of these, *the Invocation of Saints*, it is a doctrine firmly believed by the Papal Church, and the same has been published by her councils and teachers. Hear the following: "Catholics believe that the angels and saints in heaven, replenished with charity, pray for us the fellow-members of the latter here on earth; that they rejoice in our conversion; that seeing God, they see and know in him all things suitable to their happy state; and, that God *may be* inclined to hear their requests made in our behalf, and for their sakes may grant us many favours. Therefore, we believe that it is *good* and *profitable* to invoke their intercession."* This, as you will easily perceive, necessarily robs the Lord Jesus of his glory, in being the *only* Intercessor before God; and the plan taken to explain, and, if possible, make palatable their sentiment, is, to allow that Christ is the only Mediator of redemption, but not of intercession. As for this last, it is, say they, as lawful to pray to the saints and angels to pray for us, as it is to ask the prayers of believers on earth. This, indeed, is the argument most frequently brought forward, and most fully enlarged upon, as they consider it more powerful than all others in establishing their favourite topic—the invocation of saints in heaven. To those acquainted with both sides of the question, the two things appear altogether different and irreconcilable. God's people are most certainly warranted to ask the prayers of their brethren on earth; for this practice they have both precept and example; and when

* The Faith of Catholics. Prop. xix. p. 431.—See Fletcher's Lectures on the Roman Catholic Religion, p. 222.

they do so, there is nothing approaching to the invocation of saints, as the Papists are taught to pray to them. This may be settled in a moment. Let themselves decide it. Let them fix on any man living whom they choose, and offer to him that service, that homage, which they pay to the dead—the inconsistency starts instantly and conspicuously into view. Let the Papists in this place try how it would suit them to address themselves in prayer to some living saint, two or three thousand miles distant. Would they not perceive the absurdity of such a measure? But this is not a whit more absurd than praying to glorified saints. Saints in heaven are no more possessed of the divine perfections of omniscience and omnipresence than saints on earth are; for, in order to their hearing them, whether in heaven or in earth, they must possess these attributes. Here are thousands of votaries in this land praying to a glorified saint, and as many on the other side of the globe so engaged at the same moment;—it is manifest, unless this saint possess the attributes of deity, he cannot hear them all, nor bless any of them by conferring the favours they crave.

Besides, it is plain that no angel or saint, however dignified, or however busily engaged, or deeply interested, in the concerns of the church on earth, would ever accept of invocation, or any divine honours done to him. Some of God's own children, through mistake, have been disposed to offer such homage; but they were always sharply rebuked for their error. Peter took up Cornelius, when he fell down and worshipped him, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." John fell down at the feet of the angel who had shown him the visions in the isle of Patmos; but the angel forbade him, and added, "See *thou do it not*; worship God."*

I cannot forbear mentioning here an anecdote told lately by a minister from Ireland, at the Anniversary of the London Hibernian Society. One of the Irish readers, a Papist, became acquainted with the Bible when he was a teacher in one of the Hibernian Society's schools. By the blessing of God upon the reading of the holy Scriptures,

* Acts x. 26. Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

he became also acquainted with that Saviour whom they reveal. Reading one day with a friend in a Popish book, he found the worship of saints recommended, with a reference to this very passage (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.), but without the text itself being given. James wished to see the text itself, and to his great astonishment, found that, instead of justifying saint or angel worship, it positively prohibited the practice as idolatrous. "Och," says his companion, "shut the book, Jem, 'tis a bad book." But James thought otherwise, and both studied it for himself, and began to read and recommend it to others.

We shall see more of such artifice before we have done. Meantime, take one other specimen of their abuse of Scripture. They prove angel-worship from the words of Jacob; "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."* Now, those who have a Bible, and choose to consult it, will find that the angel Jacob spoke of, was none other than the Angel of the covenant, Jehovah Jesus, unto whom every knee shall bow.

When the inhabitants of Lystra proffered religious adoration to Paul and Barnabas, after the healing of the cripple, they immediately and strenuously forbade them to do any such thing, and led them directly to the living God to whom all worship is due. "They rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."†

The Scriptures, as every one might expect, are throughout opposed to idol-worship of every kind. This is so much their character, that the Papists of modern times shift the ground by saying, "That as the thing is not forbidden it is good; that where there is no law there is no transgression." In the "Catholic Christian," a work of great celebrity among them, this passage is produced as a warrant for their practice; but feeling, after all, it was not to the point, the writer, like the rest of his companions, hies himself with all convenient

speed to that bottomless vortex; the custom of the church and tradition. Those who choose to venture in with him there, and believe all the church says, will, of course, get proof enough for the invocation of saints; yea, will be informed that the practice has been sanctioned by mighty miracles in every age.

Should any of you hesitate about receiving the fact that Papists are taught to pray to saints, I shall give you a literal translation of a prayer or two, as a sample, taken from their own Breviary: "O Lord, protect thy people; and let the trust which they have in the intercession of the blessed Peter and Paul, and of the other holy apostles, engage thee to preserve them by a continual assistance."

Again; "O ye blessed apostles of our Lord,—defend me from the pains of hell, rescue me from the power of darkness, and bring me to the everlasting kingdom."

She farther makes her suppliants ask of God, "That they may be delivered from the flames of hell, by the merits and prayers of St. Nicolas; that they may be absolved from their sins by the merits of St. Athanasius, St. Leo, and St. Basil; and that by the merit of St. Lewis they may be made fellow-heirs with Jesus Christ, the King of kings."*

Is not this professedly to worship both the creature and the Creator? If it be not, I have to confess my total ignorance of the meaning and connexion of words. It is mockery, and worse, to come forward and tell us, by way of explanation, that nevertheless they do *not mean* that these saints should be worshipped. We are not to be put off with this artifice—this specious but spurious comment. The question is, What is the natural, necessary, and only meaning which any untutored unbiassed mind must attach to such language?—Yea, by any mind, however cultivated, if honest—what meaning can be attached to it with propriety other than appears at the first glance? Is it not puzzling in the extreme, first to be taught to pray, "O ye blessed apostles—defend us from the pains of hell," and in the next breath to

* Brev. Rom. p. 93.—Pictet's Protestant Reformation Vindicated, p. 127.

* Gen. xlviii. 16.

† Acts xiv. 14, 15.

be informed, that it is *not meant* that these saints should be prayed to? Why, my brethren, in proportion as the mind becomes enlightened, so far from being able to reconcile the commentary with the text—the contradiction appears the more extraordinary, the explanation is treated as a quibble, and the whole is discarded as a cheat. We detest evasion, especially about a matter connected with the weal or woe of immortal souls; say, without equivocation, Are such words, however artfully guarded, calculated to mislead, or not? By such addresses, are saints worshipped, or not?—The Church of Rome may lift again her clamorous voice, and deny the charge of idolatry, if she pleases; but while we can open an eyelid, we must perceive her guilt; and while we can give utterance to ideas, we must charge her with the guilt of idolatry. It is for a lamentation that any of our countrymen should be enticed by her dalliance. It is to commit their strength to the destroyer; let them be roused to examine matters, nor permit themselves to be longer bewildered amidst her deadly entanglements.

Idolatry, in one shape or other, is a sin men have been ever prone to fall into, and Popery has taken advantage of this corrupt propensity. When God chose Abraham and separated him and his family for his own service, the world seems to have been nearly overrun with this ruinous iniquity. In the family of Jacob you hear of false gods, and of his burying them out of sight. In Egypt, where his family sojourned, there was nothing of a religious kind to be witnessed but what was foreign from the worship of the true God. There the Israelites were not only oppressed and unjustly dealt with; they were in danger from another quarter, and did not altogether escape uninjured.* Their history for hundreds of years, after their escape from Egypt, shows at once their liability to err in this way, and the sore displeasure of the Most High against them because of this very thing. The intelligence is communicated for our learning. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

* Exod. xxxii. 1—6. Ezek. xx. 8.

But we must advert to the law which God gave from Sinai, which he wrote on two tables of stone, and which is universally and for ever binding on the children of men. The ten commandments are most faithfully translated and divided in our Bibles and Catechisms. This, however, is not generally the case in Popish books. You there meet with the first commandment and part of the second joined in one, which they call the first; the third is the second; the fourth, the third; and so on, till you come to the tenth, which, to keep up the number, they call the ninth and tenth commandments, making two of it.* It was not until after the Reformation they produced the second commandment, which forbids the worshipping of images. They were forced to do it then; the Protestant influence made them bring it forward; but where this is not felt, the practice of excluding it is still persisted in. We have often seen their books where it is wanting, and also where it is written; but, in this latter case, the reader is seldom able to perceive for himself what is the word of the Lord in the second commandment, owing to the mutilated manner in which it appears. With the full commandment before him, every one must see at once that the invocation of saints and angels, or the making and bowing down before images, is forbidden by the letter and spirit of that law.

But such is the lust of the Church of Rome after idolatry, and such is her impudence, that in the Catechism published by her last general council, *for the use of all the pastors of the Catholic Church*, there is found, divided into different chapters, a long commentary, professedly upon the first commandment, that is, upon the first and part of the second, the title of which commentary is, “Concerning the worship and invocation of saints.”† If ever an opportunity offered to decry idolatry, or a commandment called for a prohibition of such a practice, surely this was it. Not so in the opinion of the Papal Church. In giving directions to the pastors on this

* Nonum et Decimum præcepta decalogi. *Non concupisces domum proximi tui,* &c.—*Cat. ad Parochos.* Pars. III. p. 325.

† DE CULTU ET INVOCATIONE SANCTORUM.—*Ibid.* p. 254.

point they are strictly enjoined at the very commencement, "That in the explanation of this commandment, the veneration and invocation of saints, angels, and the souls of the blessed must be carefully taught; as also the worship of their very bodies, and of the ashes of the faithful, which the Catholic Church has always admitted, and to which this law is not opposed."* From this specimen you may guess what follows. Many an argument for idolatry is there recorded, which we think quite unnecessary to detain you with. Some of the heads of the different chapters under the general title I have mentioned, must not, however, be altogether omitted. They are as follow: "The worship of angels not opposed to this precept."—"Wherefore angels were *sometimes* unwilling to be worshipped."—"Angels must be prayed to."—"Worship given to saints diminishes not the glory of God."—"The same proved from the fathers, from apostolic tradition, and from the Scriptures."—"The saints aid us by their own merits."—"So many miracles prove the invocation of saints."—"The virtue of relics confirm the same thing."† To prove these different topics many are the references to the fathers, the apocrypha, and councils; yea, here and there, to the Scriptures themselves. Before losing sight of the Romish exposition of the second commandment, we do most solemnly declare that, if it be possible for language to express what idolatry means, idolatry is by this language both sanctioned and enjoined; and that too, as every one may see, in the professed exposition of the *very law* of God which forbids idolatry. After this, none need be surprised at what this church will advance. She tells the world she is no idolater, nor friend to idolatry; while, in her own authorized and published ecclesiastical injunctions, she compels her

* "Verum illud etiam in hujus præcepti explicatione accurate docendum est, venerationem, et invocationem Sanctorum, Angelorum, ac Beatarum animarum, quæ cælesti gloria perfruuntur, aut etiam corporum ipsorum, sanctorumque cinerum cultum, quem semper Catholica Ecclesia adhibuit, huic legi non repugnare."—*Cat. ad Parochos*. Pars. III. p. 254.

† "Cultus Sanctorum huic præcepto non repugnat."—"Angeli cur coli aliquando noluerint."—"Invocandi sunt Angeli," etc.—*Ibid.*

children by all the force of law to become idolaters, and forsake the worship of the living and true God.

For the sake of a solitary member of the Church of Rome who may peradventure be present, but who knows not what is contained in the second precept of the law, I shall give it in full: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."* Having heard the whole precept, I ask you, Do you consider it as divine? If so, manfully avow your conviction, and without delay forsake the communion of a church that holds and promulgates what is contrary to this holy precept.

But the second commandment is not the only passage that prohibits idolatry; the whole tenor of the Word of God is set against it. Jehovah has there declared that he alone is to be worshipped. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *ONLY* shalt thou serve." "There is no other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us *there is but one* God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."† The little boy's answer is in harmony with this. When asked how he knew there was but one God, he replied, "Because God fills every place, so that there is no room for any more." How much might Papists learn from this!

The same kind of reasoning applies to Christ's intercession. He is perfectly qualified for the whole, and is in truth the only Mediator between God and man. In virtue of his atonement, his intercession is all-prevalent. He has carried his own blood into heaven; and,

* Exod. xx. 4—6.

† Matt. iv. 10. 1 Cor. viii. 4—6.

because of what he finished on earth, he is seated on the right hand of God making continual intercession for us. This gives freedom and boldness in approaching a throne of grace. "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." This is the plea, the only plea, to be used there; and we need no other. His intercession of itself is enough. To introduce others as mediators before God is to do all that can be done to dishonour Christ. The abominable shifts that have been fallen upon, and erroneous interpretations of Scripture that have been imposed upon the people by the Church of Rome, stamp her character as an apostate, and are the infallible prognostications of her direful overthrow.

To tell us of the excellency of saints, or the dignity of angels, is not of the slightest consequence in this argument. Were it possible for them to be more excellent and more dignified than they have been, or are, to invoke them is idolatry as gross, and as fatal, as it would be to pray to a piece of wood, to the sun, or to satan. The thing is perfectly explicit. "I *am* the LORD; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." And as for "idolaters"—they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." *

Neither are we to be deceived by the noise of miracles, which, if you listen to the voice of this charmer, are of every day occurrence in the Church of Rome. Miracles continued for a season in the Church of God, but ceased when their end was accomplished. They are no longer required, and are no longer witnessed. What that church calls miracles, the miracles of departed saints, are all lying wonders which can never be credited by any person of sense, of intelligence, or of piety. Yet many do believe that departed saints are to be invoked, and that they have it in their power to work miracles still. In countries where Popery prevails, such as Italy, they have images of the different saints that are to be prayed to, and around each image a number of blinded worshippers may be seen, some praying to St. George,

* Isaiah xlii. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

others to St. Patrick, others to St. Nicholas, &c. They have also their saints who are to be invoked under certain diseases. One is applied to for the cure of sore eyes, and others for the cure of the different maladies which attack sinful man. They bring their gifts, present their prayers, and are silly enough to believe that those departed saints will administer a cure. You may laugh at their credulity, or pity them for their weakness; but such is Popery. It presents you with no bright side—it possesses no redeeming qualities.

But of all the saints, ancient or modern, Mary is most frequently supplicated. Indeed, in the system of Popery, she is not so much a saint as she is the goddess. The prayers addressed to her are every-day prayers, and are far more numerous than those addressed to the Saviour, and are in their nature most blasphemous—in their tendency, destructive. Mary takes the precedence even of Christ; she is requested to command, in other words, to compel her Son to bestow such and such favours upon her supplicants. Even when doing this, they attempt to deny that they give her divine honour: but listen once more to their sophistry. They have three words which signify three kinds of worship or adoration. "The highest they term *latria* (*λατρεία*), and appropriate it exclusively to the Divine Being; the lowest they term *doulia* (*δουλεία*), and render this species of adoration to saints and angels; and the third is a middle kind of worship, styled *hyperdoulia* (*υπερδουλεία*), not so exalted as the first, nor so common as the last, but something between both, and this they ascribe exclusively to the blessed Virgin." * It is the opinion of many Papists, that, on account of the holiness of the Virgin Mary, men owe *doulia* to her; on account of her maternal relation, they owe her *hyperdoulia*; and because she touched our Saviour, the adoration of *latria* is likewise due to her. † The names they give her offer indignity to the true God; some of them are, "Sovereign Queen of heaven, Mother of God, Mother of mercies, Gate of glory, Morning Star, Fountain of Mercy,

* Fletcher's Lectures, p. 221.

† Spirit of the Church of Rome, p. 23.

Powerful and all-sufficient Mediator between God and man," &c. Thus deified you may expect that she will exert extraordinary powers. If you can believe Papists, Mary has wrought more miracles than were ever wrought by all others put together; that which Jesus did, and which all the prophets and apostles did in his name, are achievements few and feeble compared with what Mary has accomplished. Her very images have spoken, have shed tears, have sung, have resisted fire and hammer, have moved in the air like birds, have made the lame walk, and the blind see. In short, the images of Mary have wrought all manner of prodigies. Mary succours her worshippers in their distress, saves them from *deserved* punishment, and introduces them into the kingdom of heaven. None can be lost who live and die in the service of the virgin Mary—this is a settled point. Do not suppose that I present before you a caricature; nothing of the kind. Shocking as this may appear to you, it is familiar to Papists; they like it, and glory in it. "What is it," say they, "to be the Mother of God!—The Mother is superior to the Son; honour is due to the Mother from the Son;"* and this may explain to you the grounds of their unlimited expectations from Mary, even should these be in opposition to the mind of Christ. "She being the mother of the Son of God, who doth produce the Holy Ghost, therefore all the gifts, virtues, and graces of the Holy Ghost, are by her hand administered to whom she pleaseth, when she pleaseth, how she pleaseth, and as much as she pleaseth."† "She assumes to herself of the omnipotency of her Son, as much as she pleaseth, and she comes before the golden altar of human reconciliation, not interceding only, but commanding, a mistress, not a servant." "If a man find himself aggrieved in the court of God's justice, he may appeal to the court of mercy of his Mother, she being that throne of grace whereof the apostle speaketh in the Hebrews, Let us go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive

* "Quid est esse Matrem Dei! Mater est causa Filii, Mater superior est Filio, Matri debetur honor a Filio."—*Cost. in Hymn. Ave Maris Stella.*

† "Mater est filii Dei qui producit," etc.—*Bernardin. Senens.*

mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need."* Surely this is to exalt the creature above the Creator, and to give a mean, erroneous, and unfavourable representation of the Son of God. To speak of the mother urging a plea against the pleasure of the Son, or being so engaged in any shape, might just be borne with in fabled heathen gods—to speak of such a thing as the truth of heaven, is insufferable. O the divine patience that bears with such blasphemy!

At the close of his paternoster, the poor Papist must repeat "Ave Maria, hail Mary," as if all his prayers were worth nothing without the mention of her honoured name. Indeed, the whole system of Popery has been sometimes not unappropriately styled, "*The religion of the virgin.*" Certainly, if you speak of Popish faith, Christ Jesus is neither its author nor finisher. "In some of their services, there are ten marias for one paternoster," and accordingly to the last, even in their dying moments, they recommend themselves to Mary's merciful protection. Their language is, "O Mary! Mother of grace, sweet Parent of Mercy, do thou protect us from the enemy, and receive us in the hour of death." And in one of their "Offices," they are taught to say, "O blessed Virgin, *who expiatest our sins*, with the authority of a Mother, command the Redeemer."† Their Breviaries, Missals, and such books, are full of such abomination. The first prayer the child is taught to articulate, is, "Hail Mary, full of grace—Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us." The Papist "every night and for ever" commits the keeping of his soul and body "to the blessed trust of the glorious virgin Mary." Think not that this was the case once, but is not the case now—these, and many such like, are the very lessons Papists are taught who live among you at the present day. Idolatry indeed!

The next thing that comes under our consideration, is *the worship of Images*, concerning which the Church of Rome has decreed, "That the images of Jesus Christ,

* "Ipsa Dei Mater de Omnipotentia filii sui," &c. —*Bust. Marial.* —Damian. Serm. de Nativit. B. Mar.—Vid. Morn. Ex. p. 522.

† Fletcher's Lectures, p. 229.

of the Holy Virgin, and other saints ought to be kept and retained, especially in the churches, and that due honour and veneration is to be paid to them; and that by the images which are kissed, and before which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Jesus Christ, and venerate the saints whose similitude they bear."* Papists are really mad upon images. Images of the holy Trinity may be seen painted in their books, and even in their chapels; the Father in the form of an old man; the Son nailed to the cross, or in the form of an infant; and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. All this is opposite to the spirit and letter of the second commandment. They are not to be made; none are to bow down before them; nor are they to be served in any shape—image-worship is not the worship of the true God. But still those who both make, and bow down before them, loudly deny that the service they pay is of an idolatrous kind. There is one mode of discovery left. Let God be true, but every man a liar; to the law and to the testimony; what do they declare idolatry to be? Whatever diverts the mind from the worship of the true God is idolatry, even should he in pretence be still adored. When the children of Israel made a calf in the wilderness and worshipped it, can you imagine for a moment that that people, sinful, blind, and stupid as they were, thought that that calf of gold was in truth the God of heaven and of earth? No such thing. They said, "To-morrow is a feast to the LORD." The calf was a visible representation through which they intended to worship Jehovah. This pleased their vitiated taste and vain imaginations. They adored the calf with respect to the supreme God—this was idolatry, and such precisely is the image-worship of Papists. Just so with the calves Jeroboam set up, and other idols you read of.

In order to prove the lawfulness of image-worship, the erecting of the brazen serpent is quoted with confidence. This serpent, it is true, was preserved for ages; and it is also true, that in the days of Hezekiah they began to burn incense before it; but this pious

king broke it in pieces, and called it Nehustan, a piece of brass. In the view of those who worship images, this must have been shocking sacrilege. It is also noticeable, that the very arguments which heathens use for worshipping idols, Papists use for worshipping images. Thus there were many images of Jupiter, of Mars, and other heathen gods, which they that worshipped, viewed in no other light than as mere representations of the gods. They never dreamt that the piece of wood or stone before them was really the mighty thunderer, or the god of war, but it was a likeness of him. The names of the heathen and Popish idols are different—the worship is the same.

It is thought by some of the best writers of church history, that the introduction of images arose from a desire, on the part of the Church of Rome, to draw off the heathens from their gods, and by this means numbers easily entered into the change, without knowing the difference; and, to this day, a difference so small is not worth the specifying. The same authorities warrant us to assert that, for at least four hundred years after Christ, all the fathers in the Roman Church were decided enemies to this service, and never scrupled to call it by its true name—idolatry. There were, then, in her communion, men of piety as well as talent, who were both able and willing to prove the practice unnecessary, inconsistent, and sinful. The dispute ran high; it was carried on against powerful opponents, statesmen and philosophers, who insisted that, while they worshipped before images, it was merely to raise there affections to a higher object, and assist them in their devotions; while men of God argued that to kneel before, kiss, or pray to, an image, was to abandon the worship of the true God. Like other innovations, it met at first with great opposition. Even so late as the eighth century, many of the bishops commanded the images to be broken, and the churches to be cleared of them. A strong party opposed this measure with the keenest violence, and called those who broke the images, Jews and Samaritans; while those, on the other hand, who retained and advocated image-worship, were called heathens and idolaters. Thus matters went on, until the pope interfered, and, by his decrees, settled the

† Pictet's Prot. Ref. Vind. 131.—Catech. Concil. Trident. p. 259.

business. He declared in favour of image-worship; and so the dispute ended in that communion. But whatever may be said, in way of explanation, by the advocates of the practice, one thing remains unshaken. It is clear that, so far as the *doctrine* of the Romish Church is concerned, *worship ought to be given to images*.

The last thing we have to attend to is the use which Romanists make of *Relics*. Relics are without number and without end. It has been reckoned that more wood of the cross has been given away, or rather sold at an enormous price, than would build the largest ship in his Majesty's service; or, than would serve a town with fuel for a whole winter. This sacred wood is never exhausted; plenty of it may be got at Rome, for money, at any time. Besides this, they are continually making crosses, wearing them, and paying honours to them. On Good Friday, the priests cry out to the people, "Behold the wood of the cross, to which was affixed the salvation of the world! Come, let us adore it,—and they fall down accordingly."*

Claude, who lived at an early period, and wrote to great purpose against the corruptions of the Church of Rome, in referring to the subject we are now upon, especially to the worshipping of the cross, reasons thus: "If, because Christ hung on the cross, they wish to adore every log of wood made in the form of a cross, they must worship many other things, which Christ acted on in the flesh. Let old rags be adored, because, as soon as he was born, he was continually wrapt in swaddling clothes. Let ships be adored, because he frequently sailed in ships. From a small ship he taught the multitudes; he slept in a ship; and from a ship commanded the winds, and gave orders to cast the net on the right side of the ship, when the great predicted capture of fishes was made. Let asses be adored, because, sitting on an ass' colt, he proceeded even to Jerusalem. Let lambs be adored, because it is written of him; 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.' But these cultivators of perverse

doctrines wish to eat living lambs, and to adore them painted on the wall. Let lions be adored, because it is written of him; 'The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed.' Let rocks be adored, because, when he was taken down from the cross, he was laid in a rocky sepulchre; and the apostle says of him, 'That rock was Christ.' But the rock Christ, the lamb, and the lion, are used figuratively, not properly—by signification, not by substance. Let the thorns of brambles be adored, because, from that material, a thorny crown was placed on his head at the time of his passion. Let reeds be adored, because, by the soldiers, his head was struck by blows of reeds. Lastly, let lances be adored, because, when on the cross, one of the soldiers with a lance opened his side, whence flowed blood and water, the sacrament from which the church is formed.

"All these things are ridiculous, and to be lamented rather than to be written. But, in opposition to fools, we are obliged to propose foolish things, and against stony hearts to cast, not arrows and sentences of the word, but volleys of stones. God commands to bear, not to worship, the cross. These people wish to adore it, but are not willing to bear it, either corporeally or spiritually."*

The following prayer, used in the consecration of images, is found in the Roman ritual: "Grant, O God, that whosoever before this image shall diligently and humbly, upon his knees, worship and honour thy only-begotten Son, or the blessed Virgin (according as the image is that is consecrating), or this glorious apostle, or martyr, or confessor, or virgin, that he may obtain, by his or her merits and intercession, grace in this present life, and eternal glory hereafter." This shows you the veneration they are taught to cherish towards relics, and that relics are not confined to pieces of wood. "Any part or particle of the saint's body, or what has

* Claude's Epistle against Worshipping of Images and Sign of the Cross;—quoted by Blair, in his History of the Waldenses, vol. I. pp. 137, 138.

touched the body, we esteem a relic.”* Hence, the bones of apostles and saints; the veil, the hair, the milk, and garments of the Virgin; part of the body of Mary Magdalene, of Lazarus, of Mark, and others; nay, even some relics of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they profess to have; and many such like things are shown in St. Peter’s church at Rome. This, my friends, is not a tale of other times. A gentleman from this country who very lately visited Rome, informs us, that “under the centre of the large dome of St. Peter’s stands the high altar, and beneath this are the ashes of St. Peter. A flight of marble steps leads down to these relics, which are kept in a golden sarcophagus, guarded by gates of brass, hung on two pillars of costly alabaster. The whole is surrounded by brass balustrades, and illuminated by two or three hundred lamps, on stands of bronze, kept continually burning night and day. At the side of the cross is the chair of St. Peter an enormous thing, supported by the four Evangelists. The monuments of popes around the sides are of the most magnificent workmanship. But the principal monument of the place is a brazen statue of St. Peter holding the keys of the church. The feet of St. Peter are half worn away by the kisses of the multitude; and I myself saw, to-day, a cardinal and a large train of priests go up and give the kiss of superstitious devotion. All the Catholics kneel as they pass the statue.”†

In a church of this stamp, relics are accounted most precious. Dexterous priests turn them to their own account; and deluded votaries think no price too high for their purchase. “When a search was made in the monasteries in the reign of King Henry VIII., such impostures were discovered as astonished those who had before been amazed at the apprehensions of their being realities. Among the relics there was an angel with one wing, that brought over the spear that pierced our Saviour’s side; the coals that burnt St. Lawrence;

the pairings of St. Edmund’s toes; St. Thomas à Becket’s penknife and boots; with as many pieces of our Saviour’s cross as would have made a whole one. There was a noted imposture discovered at Hales, in Gloucestershire, where the blood of our Saviour in a crystal vial, which the people sometimes saw, and at other times could not see it. They were made to believe that they were not capable of such a singular favour, so long as they were in mortal sin; and were obliged to continue to make presents, till they had bribed heaven to give them a sight of so blessed a relic. This was found to be the blood of a duck, which they renewed every week. The one side of the glass was so thick that there was no seeing through it, but the other was clear and transparent, and it was placed so near the altar that one, in a secret place behind, could turn either side of it outward; so that, when they had drained the pilgrims that came thither of all they had brought with them, then they turned round the thin side of the glass, and allowed them a sight of the blood, and they went away well pleased with their journey, and the expense they had been at.”*

The miracles that have been performed by relics are beyond numbering and beyond belief. No person, of course, ever saw one of them wrought; but members of the Church of Rome lay no stress upon this fact. Relics, however worthless, are of great value in their estimation. It is but lately the following advertisement appeared in a French journal: “Some ladies, travelling from Perpignan to Montpellier, in the diligence, have lost a mahogany box, six inches by four, covered with gilt copper, containing a relic, with the following legend:—Eye-tooth of St. Bernardin, with a ring in the form of a lyre to fasten it by. The finders are requested to send it to the mayors of Perpignan or Montpellier, where they will receive 100 francs (£4) reward.” An enormous sum for a tooth!—an old, a very old eye-tooth! What would a whole carcass be worth at this rate? But there was some imagined virtue in the tooth; for all their relics are endowed with powers

* The Protestant’s Trial, p. 57.

† London Congregational Magazine for February, 1834.

* Murray’s Lectures on the Revelation, vol. II. pp. 313, 314.

quite superhuman. They have about them what will keep evil spirits at a distance, heal diseases, or recommend the possessors to God,—should they consist of nothing else than the pairings of the toes, or the eye-tooth, of an old sinner.

Those who are curious on this point, and wish further information concerning relics, may consult Popish books, or such works as the Protestant, where they will find their curiosity satisfied to their hearts' content. The above brief outline is sufficient for our present purpose, and disgusting enough to make us break off without enlargement. Before parting, let us turn our eyes in another direction. It is impossible for a system to be more full of abominable falsehood than Popery. Its atmosphere is the most unwholesome in the world. It is filled throughout with smoke issuing from the pit; in whatever direction you turn yourself, you inhale noxious vapours.

While we have no confidence in the merits, intercession, or relics, of saints departed, let us all rejoice in the ability of Christ to save. He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour. Such was the nature and extent of our apostacy from God, that no human, no angelic, merits could repair the damages of the fall, or meet our helpless and lost condition. The breach that stood between an offended God and offending creatures, was wide as the sea; the combined prayers, obedience, and sufferings of men and of angels, could make no reparation, give no satisfaction. The just and holy law, which we all have broken, rivets down every transgressor to endless unutterable woe. Judge then of the demerits of sin by the punishment it deserves. What is its due? "The wages of sin is death." But let me rather call your attention to the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and intercession of him who stood in the gap between the living and the dead; who answered all the demands the law had against the culprit; who finished transgression, and made atonement for the guilty. Think, my dear hearers, on the love of God to a lost world; with wonder and admiration think on the Son of God leaving the bosom of the Father, being made flesh, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on all who believe in his great and glorious name.

Behold the Day's-man who laid his hand on both parties, who took the traitor's place, and by his obedience unto death became the sinner's hope, the sinner's surety, and the sinner's portion. O! think on the work he undertook, on the sufferings he endured, on what he finished, until each of you cry out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Look on him whom your sin pierced, until you mourn for him as for a first-born. The gate of heaven was shut against us, and none but he could open it. He saw our deplorable, desperate condition, pitied us, and flew to our relief. He suffered, the just for the unjust, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He broke the power of the destroyer, and obtained for us everlasting redemption. Having accomplished the purposes designed by his coming to this world, he took his seat on high, and appears for us on the right hand of God. It is this which affords encouragement to believe and pray—it is all-sufficient—we need no more. Here is salvation, free, full, and eternal. The Father is well pleased for his righteousness' sake. Let none present turn away from him who speaketh to them from heaven; let them not despise so precious a Saviour, or neglect so great a salvation. At least, before doing so, let them seriously ponder to which of the saints they will look, or to which hand they will turn in the day of trial. Here is one hiding place, and other there is not. Much is at stake; let the present opportunity of shelter be embraced; for all must be speedily lost or won for ever.

While in Scripture you have neither precept nor example for invoking saints in heaven, you are most decidedly and often entreated to be followers of them who are now inheriting the promises. Many prayers are recorded in the sacred volume, but not one of them is addressed to saints; God's people have been shown a better way, even to worship and serve the Lord their God. If there is a certain description of persons who enter into life, and another description of persons who do not; if the history of believers is written, having the testimony of the Spirit annexed to it, that we must be made like unto them ere we can be admitted into

that kingdom which they inherit; what is duty but to see to it that our faith and obedience resemble theirs. They who are now before the throne were once sinners and children of wrath; but they became the children of God, believed the gospel of Christ, and walked in all his ordinances and commandments. They denied themselves, took up the cross, and followed Jesus. They accounted themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. Such was their character, such their conduct, and such the prospect set before them; and the God in whom they trusted blasted not their hopes—they are now before the throne. When they came to die, they committed their departing souls, not into the hands of angels or departed saints, but into the hand of their faithful Almighty Redeemer. Their bodies fell asleep in Jesus; their spirits entered into the joy of their Lord. They are now infinitely removed from sin and danger, sorrow and death. They have entered into rest, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. Such is their blessed lot, and may it be ours to share it at the end of the days! We can share it only by believing and following the same Lord whom they believed in and obeyed; our life, as theirs was, must be hid with Christ in God. Then, if we look for him as they looked, he will appear, unto us as unto them, without sin unto salvation. O happy, happy assembly! Let us forsake all and follow him whom they followed, and very soon we shall join them in their service and in their song. Amen.

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION, THE DOCTRINE OF INDULGENCES, AND THE CRUEL SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE church that advocates the first of these topics, and practises the two last, cannot belong to Christ. The lofty pretension of the first, the unhallowed presumption of the second, and the savage nature of the third, are spots which sully not the character of his people. To maintain such doctrines and cherish such a spirit, yet struggle to retain the name of the church of God, is to act their part whom Jesus denominated a “generation of vipers.” But let us see whether the Church of Rome be guilty of the three separate charges brought against her in the title of this discourse.

Perhaps to some the very term supererogation may require to be defined. The meaning of it is, a performance of more than duty requires; it is a doing of more than even God has commanded to be done—“proud words and vain.” This doctrine has, with great propriety, been styled “The topmost pinnacle of Romish Babel,” “The top round of Popish arrogance,” and “The proud doctrine of Papists.” Their own account of supererogation is, that “There have been, now are, and still will be, in the church some eminent and transcendent saints, such as the Virgin Mary, John Baptist, St. Peter, St. Paul, Ignatius, Loiola, St. Dominic, St. Francis, and many signal martyrs and confessors, that, by the assisting grace of God vouchsafed to them in this life, and the wise improvement of their own free will, *have been enabled perfectly, and personally, and perpetually, to keep the whole law of God*; and by this have merited eternal life for themselves, and greater degrees

of glory: nay, more, not only so, not only have done *all the good which the Lord required*, or only just so much as the Lord demanded; not only given the Lord good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, *but even running over*, that is, by lending an obedient ear to God's *evangelical counsels*, which are things of greater moment than God's moral precepts, they have even done *more than the law demands*, more than was needful to be done by them for eternal salvation, and have suffered more grievous torment than their sin deserved, and by both, that is, by their obedience and sufferings, have most plentifully *merited* for others." The above is more briefly expressed by the council of Trent: "That men truly merit eternal life, and the increase of grace and of glory by their own good works, and if any man shall say otherwise, let him be accursed." *

In order to the performance of supererogatory works they make a distinction, which God has never made, between works commanded and works commended—between evangelical precepts and evangelical counsels. Evangelical counsels they speak of as being seldom performed, and recommend them as far excelling evangelical precepts; hence he who does them, does more than God requires. According to the Popish opinion, when Christ commends, but does not command, a work, this work, if not done, does not expose the neglecter of it to condemnation; but if done, it merits a greater degree of glory. To give you an example, I shall select one very frequently produced by Popish writers to prove this absurd doctrine, and which, they think, establishes the point in their favour. It is the saying of our Lord to the young man who asked him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" This young man was ignorant both of the character of Jesus, and of the deceitfulness of his own heart. When told to keep the commandments, he said he had done so, and wished to know what he yet lacked. In reply to this, "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and

* Morning Exercises, p. 575.—Pict. p. 156.—Concil. Trident. Sess. VI. Can. 32.

thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow me."* Here Papists suppose an evangelical counsel to be distinguished from an evangelical precept. The precept is, "Keep the commandments," and that is sufficient for salvation; but if thou wilt be perfect, that is to say, if thou wilt supererogate, if thou wilt not be pleased barely with eternal life, but wilt aspire after a more excellent degree of it, then, "Go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Such is the tenet, and by such means they seek to establish it. But this proof, the strongest they have, goes for nothing when it is recollected that, to that particular person, upon that particular occasion, the command of our Lord was absolutely positive; to him, at that time, there was no alternative. Besides, he who made the demand had a right to dictate, and he left it not in the young man's choice. It was in this manner he had dealt with his apostles, and, in obedience to his call, they had left all, and were following him. Of this person he asked nothing more than he had required of them, and the sacrifice, on the part of some of them at least, had perhaps been greater than it could have been on his. To every intelligent impartial reader, it must also appear that "treasures in heaven" is nothing more than another expression for "eternal life." Our Lord simply told him that he would be no loser, but a great gainer, by obeying his voice; just as he has engaged to recompense every one who suffers for him in this world an hundred-fold, and in the world to come to give life everlasting. "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."† It is worthy of remark, that this declaration to the disciples stands in the immediate connexion of the declaration made to the young man—as if intended to prevent the possibility of a mistake.

When I repeat that this is the strongest proof they can adduce in favour of this error, it supersedes the necessity of examining other passages on the point. And

* Matt. xix. 16—22.

† Matt. xix. 29.

to settle in few words the whole of this matter, let two or three simple questions be asked, and answered, in a Scriptural manner.

First, What is every man bound to do? To this there can be but one proper answer returned; namely, To obey God. Now God's law is not only exceeding broad, reaching to the very thoughts and intents of the heart; but it is also a perfect law, a law, holy, good, and just; requiring immediate, full, and perpetual obedience. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* Such is the sum of the divine requisition; and this law is such a discernor of the thoughts and purposes of the heart, that it pronounces that to be murder when a brother is secretly hated, as certainly so, as when his blood is shed. To look on a woman to lust after her, is as really a breach of the seventh commandment, as when adultery is committed.† It pronounces that idolatry when God is forgotten, as much so as when a visible idol is set up in his room. Nor is it obedience to one or two, or any given number of the commandments, to the exclusion of the rest: it is all his commandments we are enjoined to learn and to keep; "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."‡ The law demands nothing less than an universal obedience, and perfection in every duty. When I say this, you are aware that believers are no longer under the law, but under grace.§ Being sinners like others, they cannot be saved by the law; and being justified by God they cannot be condemned by the law; but this amazing deliverance wrought for them, loosens them not from their *obligation* to keep all God's commandments. Indeed, to justified persons, the law of the Lord is their delight, and the divine promise given to them is, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."|| Hence to obey God

* Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

‡ James ii. 10.

† Matt. v. 21—28.

§ See Rom. chaps. v. and vi.

|| Rom. vii. 22.—Ps. cxix. 97.—Jer. xxxi. 33.

is both their work and their pleasure. They are guilty of many short-comings, but they are not the persons who will seek to excuse themselves, and find fault with the law. Christ himself declared, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil." And the apostle asks firmly, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."*

Our *second* question is, Has any man since the entrance of sin done his duty fully? An account of many good and great men is found in the Word of God; one of the prominent excellencies of this account is its faithfulness; it may be depended upon. It is not too much to say that the cloud of witnesses, whose history is given, contains many names singular for piety; yet in the best of them you find blots and imperfections. Noah was a man who found favour in the sight of the Lord, whom he feared and served; but you find him, even after the flood, drunk in his tent. Few men ever adorned the profession of godliness more than Abraham, and yet, upon more occasions than one, he was left to fall into the sin of speaking deceitfully. Moses was noted for his meekness, and had nearer intercourse with God than any other individual. He was also faithful in all his house; yet was he guilty of sinful ebullitions of anger, and of speaking unadvisedly with his lips. Eli was the priest of God, but failed in his duty to his children. In all his public transactions as a warrior and a king, David was a man according to God's own heart—a man of another and better spirit than his predecessor; yet David was guilty of adultery and of murder. Come we to the New Testament; a greater than John the Baptist had not been born; and yet unbelief, at least impatience, prevailed against him to a certain extent, even at a late period of his life. All the apostles of Jesus manifested more than once or twice great weakness of faith. So far was the great apostle of the Gentiles from being perfect while he sojourned here, that he acknowledged his imperfections, and complained bitterly under the remains of sin.† It is true he once thought himself perfect; but he was

* Matt. v. 17.—Rom. iii. 31.

† Rom. vii.

then in a state of distance from God, and laboured under a grievous mistake as to his own real condition. The consequence was, when the commandment came, he thought very differently—sin revived, and he died. He had no room after that to entertain high thoughts of himself. The young man, to whose case we have already referred, thought himself perfect, but Christ showed him he was mistaken. Nicodemus held a high office, had much intelligence, and inherited a blameless character; but Jesus taught him a doctrine which, though a master of Israel, he knew not. He must be born again, before he could enter into the kingdom of God.

These and many similar examples might be produced, to show the absurdity of the doctrine of supererogation; but aside from them all, there are so many direct, strong, and unqualified assertions in the Scriptures, to the same purport, that, independently of the whole, we may safely aver, that no man ever came up to the demands of the law. The words of Solomon are quite decisive: “For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.” “For *there is* no man that sinneth not.” “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”* The best on earth mingle sin with their best actions. They may be just, and justified by faith, in the sight of God; but, while here, their actions are mixed with guilt. They are sanctified, but not sinless ones in this world. The sweet Psalmist of Israel prays thus: “Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”† This accords with the language of the New Testament: “Now, we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. Where is boasting then? It is excluded.” “In many things we offend all.” “If we say

* Eccles. vii. 20. 1 Kings viii. 46. Prov. xx. 9.

† Ps. cxliii. 2.

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

Thirdly, Is it *possible* for any man to live in this imperfect state of being without committing sin? However humbling to all, or stumbling to some, a plain unsophisticated negative answer must be given in; nor after what has just been advanced, need we hesitate—the thing is impossible. Let none strengthen the hands of Papists in their proud doctrine of supererogation, by asking, Is not God then unjust, to call upon men to do more than they are able? It is thus some argue like infidels, when attacked concerning this matter, forgetting that God made man upright, that he originally gave him powers and an inclination to serve him with a perfect heart and in a perfect manner. Will any one be bold enough to lay the blame of the fall, or of any of its direful issues, to the charge of Jehovah? This were daring indeed. Supposing the father of the prodigal had, upon his return, asked from him what he gave him and what he had wasted, would the son have said, in the depth of his penitence, You ask what is unjust? He would have but sunk lower in his own eyes, and acknowledged the justice of his father's demand, although he had spent the whole, and had nothing to return. Is it unjust for a creditor to ask his own, although the debtor has squandered it all away? Carry the same idea to this subject, and, if you fail to find what satisfies you fully, you will at least find what is sufficient to justify God and condemn every man. Or, let any person here say, if he can in the presence of God declare, that he has done even what he could? Every man's conscience must convict him before God, of having been guilty of much sin against both light and conviction. Even regarding the holiest men on earth, so long as they remain here, so long their sanctification is incomplete; there is a law in their members warring against the law of their mind; their very knowledge is imperfect, and some sin easily besets them, some lust that wars against their souls; something or other taints and blemishes their

* Rom. iii. 19, 20, 27. James iii. 2. 1 John i. 8.

duties; enough still cleaves to them to hide pride from their eyes, and lead them to view their righteousnesses as filthy rags. Perfect saints are found in heaven; but while here, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Not so the Popish doctrine. Romanists, high-born souls! may, at their pleasure, leap over the heads of other men, and fairly seat themselves, even here, in the chair of perfection; may be satisfied with nothing in heaven but a very high seat—and all this by their own merits. Could such men be got in reality? Where are they at present? Is there one such in Scotland's isle? But I will not burlesque them; for, impertinent as Popery is, its votaries in these quarters would shrink from the challenge, and we press it not.

I have, however, one question more. *Fourthly*, Supposing a person could be found who, in truth, had done all which God has commanded, or, if you will, commended, would this man have any thing to boast of in the sight of God? Would he have any thing to claim from him in the way of merit, because of his perfect obedience? I trow not. If any one had thus served him, was not the whole accomplished by God's assistance? Would not that very individual be the first to acknowledge, "I have indeed served the Lord with a perfect heart; but it has been wholly with his own that I have served him." That is the very person who would be foremost in acknowledging his unprofitableness, and in setting his seal to the truth of Christ's declaration, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."* The highest obedience that can be given by any creature of Jehovah's hand, is at the very most but the paying of debt; merit is what can never attach to it. This comes not within the range of possible things. There was merit, infinite merit, attached to the obedience and sufferings of the blessed Saviour; but, then, remember who he was; think on that amazing declaration: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."†

* Luke xvii. 10.

† 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Again, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* To this humiliation, obedience, and death, the term *merit is justly due*, and were it not so, lamentation, mourning, and woe must have been written over us for ever. But here we fear not to ask what *merit* means; nor have we any fear that he will lose the *merited* reward. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Merit—what is it? "The just desert of a voluntary action, whereunto a proportionable reward is due out of justice, so that if it be not given, an injury is really committed, and he to whom retribution properly belongs should be really unjust, if he did not exactly compensate." Papists themselves will not object to this definition; but they will not see how it applies only to the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will not believe, however evident the truth, that this towering imagination of theirs stands opposed, like a mighty bulwark, to their own eternal salvation. With the armoury of God's word, it is easy to tumble down this proud topstone; but though supererogation be laid in the dust, they cling to it still;—it indulges their pride, and is a doctrine of their so-called infallible church. O that they would begin to think for themselves! Here is a subject that lies open for investigation, and comes fairly within the reach of every ordinary capacity. It is just as plain that there is no proportion between eternal life and works performed here for a season, as that two and two make four. Is it possible for a creature to be profitable to God, as one man may be to another? What is it in the way of advantage to God if we be righteous? Is he a profiter thereby, or does he receive any thing in addition to what he previously possessed? There is justice in paying debt, but no merit. The very pretension to this, the mere holding of such a doctrine, dis-

* Philip. ii. 6—8.

plays a blindness, an obstinacy, a pride, which betray their origin. You may guess at once the author of such a tenet; for Christ tells all his followers their entire dependence upon himself: "Without me, ye can do nothing." The glory of all that is done is due to him, and they will for ever acknowledge it. "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy *and* for thy truth's sake."

Before leaving supererogation, there is one passage more we must advert to, because Papists quote it as favouring this doctrine. It is the language of Paul to the Colossians: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."* Unless to support a system, no one would ever think that Paul meant by these words any thing like merit, or satisfaction, given by him for the sake of the church; or that he was partly engaged in making atonement for the church of God by his own personal sufferings. Such an application is so far removed from the nature and scope of this text, that we cannot help wondering at the ignorance or low artifice it displays. "By the afflictions of Christ, the apostle does not mean those which Christ *endured*, but those which Christ appointed him to suffer, and which were actually suffered for the cause of Christ. There is a similar phrase in Heb. xi. 26. 'the reproach of Christ,' which cannot mean the reproach suffered by Christ, but what was suffered *in his cause*. 'Filling up that which was behind in the afflictions of Christ,' evidently meant, enduring the remainder of that affliction which it was the will of God to appoint to him, in the service of Christ and for the good of the church—not to procure absolution, but to evince his personal sincerity, and his strong attachment to the cause of the Redeemer, notwithstanding all his sufferings."† It is impossible not to perceive the marked difference between suffering *for the good* of others, and satisfying *for the guilt* of others. Paul rejoiced in the former of these, but rejected the latter with abhorrence. "Was Paul crucified for you?"

"That some men have not only merit enough to purchase eternal life for themselves, but a great deal to spare for the relief of others," is a doctrine of devils. It is true that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example,* that we should follow his steps;—that we should suffer for the benefit of others, but not in the way of redemption. This comes to us wholly through the blood of the atonement. Col. i. 24. is finely illustrated by 2 Cor. i. 5, 6: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or, whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation."

The second thing to be considered is, *Indulgences*. Let us first hear an explanation of this extraordinary doctrine from Popish authorities. "By indulgence," say they, "the Catholic Church means no more than a releasing of true penitents the debt of temporal punishment, which remained due to their sins, after the sins themselves, as to the guilt of eternal punishment, had been already remitted, by the sacrament of penance, or by perfect contrition. That you may understand this the better, take notice that, in sin, there are two things;—there is the guilt of the sin, and there is the debt of the punishment due to God upon account of the sin. Upon the sinner's repentance and confession, the sin is remitted as to guilt. An indulgence, when duly obtained, is a release from the debt of temporal punishment. The treasures of the church, out of which indulgences are granted, are the merits and satisfaction of Christ and his saints, out of which the church, when she grants an indulgence to her children, offers to God an equivalent for the punishment which was due to the divine justice. A plenary indulgence releases the whole punishment that remained due upon account of past sins. By an indulgence of so many years or days is meant, the remission of the penance of so many years or days, and consequently of the punish-

* Col. i. 24.

† Fletcher's Lectures, p. 193.

* 1 Peter ii. 21.

ment corresponding to the sins, which, by the canons of the church, would have required so many years or days of penance.”* By this definition, you will perceive that indulgence stands closely allied to the sacrament of penance, by which a priest grants full absolution, in declaring “the sinner to be relieved from the guilt of all his sins, and reconciled to God, but that he ought to make some remuneration for so great a favour; that he should suffer something in his body as a punishment for his sins thus forgiven; and the design of our indulgence is to release him from such suffering, which is usually done for an adequate consideration. He is told, when the sacrament of penance is over, that he must do some great work, or suffer some punishment for all his great sins which he has confessed, but, that he may have an indulgence; that is, that he may be released from such suffering for a certain sum, which he cheerfully pays. He sets off to plunge anew into the stream of wickedness, like the profligate seductress in the seventh of Proverbs: ‘I have peace-offerings with me; this day I have paid my vows. Come, let us take our fill of pleasures.’”†

In proportion to the enormity of the sins a person has been guilty of in the eye of the Popish Church, the penance for length and severity corresponds. Thus, a few days’ penance may be thought sufficient for certain sins, while others require whole years, nay, thousands of years, to give satisfaction for their remission. And when indulgence is spoken of as stretching to a great many years—Bishop Burnet mentions having seen one that extended to ten thousand years—the meaning is, that the sins of the individual were of such an aggravated nature that they deserved, and must have met with, all that length of time in suffering ere they could have been delivered, but for indulgence. I do not tarry to prove that, according to the tenets of that church, sin past, present, and future, may be pardoned by plenary indulgence. Were this denied, it were easy to produce the Bulls of popes and deeds of bishops in evi-

* Cath. Chris. pp. 105—109.

† Protestant, vol. I. pp. 138, 139.

dence. In the mean time, I feel no anxiety about taking advantage of these; for, by her own acknowledgment, there is such a thing as indulgence given, and this is sufficient for our present purpose.

What indulgence is I have told you in her own language, by which it clearly appears that the greatest criminals have received, and may receive it, for a thousand years. The meaning of which is, stript of all ambiguity, that whatever a man is guilty of, if his sin should be so enormous as to deserve a thousand years’ punishment, he may obtain forgiveness and a release, if he has money to pay for his escape. If this is not doctrine fraught with mischief and ruin; if it is not in its very nature calculated to lead men forward in a course of crime; if it is not opposed to the whole revealed will of heaven, then we know not what is. I ask no definition from a Protestant, nor the gloss of any adversary to Popery, to satisfy me that this is a doctrine most mischievous and destructive. Give me the language of Papists, clothed in terms as cautious as they please to express themselves, and it requires no great sagacity, knowledge, or penetration in dissecting it, to show the utter impossibility of reconciling indulgence with the book of God.

I go one step farther; I do not affirm that this dangerous doctrine is taught and adhered to in this country in the same manner, or to the same extent, it is in some others; and yet there is enough remains to exhibit the antichristian nature of that church which holds in any shape, or to any extent, a doctrine so glaringly opposed to the mind of Christ. It is truly mournful to think that there should be found a solitary individual so destitute of Scripture knowledge, as to plead for what the whole divine testimony sets its face against. I am aware it has been denied by some Popish teachers; but this is to dissemble, which is, if possible, worse than an open avowal of it. Perhaps, on this point, some may wish the attestation of another, and I shall gratify them by quoting a short paragraph from the writings of a minister of the Church of England, published lately:—

“I come,” says he, “to the doctrine of indulgences—and of them I would have had no occasion to speak again, but for a

circumstance that almost compels me to it. I stated from this place, what is notorious to every Roman Catholic, the scandalous sale of indulgences in that church, and the daring impiety of thus encouraging sin, by promising forgiveness to the offender before-hand; and to so plain an assertion I no more expected a contradiction, than I should had I asserted that Bonaparte was dead, or George IV. was on the throne, or any other historical fact of universal and recent notoriety. Now, a reverend gentleman in this city, a Roman Catholic preacher of no ordinary merit and fame, was pleased to notice this assertion, and to inform his hearers that the Roman Catholic Church never did dispense her indulgences as an encouragement to the guilty, but as a reward to the deserving. He was pleased to add, that they were conferred *for*, and always produced some moral benefit to the receiver. In enumerating, however, the various advantages to be derived from the doctrine of indulgences, the reverend gentleman happened to forget a most important one, and I shall be glad to assist his memory. Whatever may be thought of the moral benefit of indulgences, no one can dispute their pecuniary benefit to the Roman Catholic Church, which the reverend gentleman wholly omitted, and of which I am about to produce a curious proof. I hold a document in my hand, containing the well-known fact of the Spanish *Galleon*, outward-bound, being captured in the year 1709, in the reign of Queen Anne, and carried into the Bristol roads; and what was part of its lading?—*five hundred bales of bulls of indulgences, and sixteen reams were in a bale*; so that they (the captors) reckoned the whole came to 3,840,000!

“These bulls are imposed on the people, and sold, the lowest at three ryals, a little more than 20*d.*, but some at 50 pieces of eight, about £11 of our money; *all are obliged to buy them against Lent*. Captain Dampier adds, he was not concerned in casting up the number of them, but there was such a vast quantity of them, that they *careened* the ship with them.

“The reverend gentleman proceeding in his discourse, and kindling as he proceeded, was pleased to ask—is there any one in this city so *infamous*—so *blasphemous*—as to assert the sale of indulgences? I am amazed such a one has not been *struck dead in the pulpit where he stood*. Now I am that daring person—and that I am alive is most certain—which I impute to the thunderbolt, fortunately for me, being placed in the hands of heaven, and not in those of the reverend gentleman—but there are some people on whom argument, admonition, and even the *mildest* expressions of Christian zeal—are utterly thrown away—and truly, I fear, I am among that number, for with the hardened and shameless obstinacy of a heretic as I am—I am about not only to repeat my assertion, but, worst of all, to prove it. I hold in my hand, and shall translate to you a copy of a bull of Pope Urban VIII.;—perhaps my Roman Catholic

hearers would rather wish that I should read it in the original Latin, but in compassion to my Protestant brethren, who are not so expert in that tongue, from having the misfortune to offer up their prayers in a language they understand, they shall have it in English:—

““Having taken into our serious consideration the great zeal of the Irish towards the propagation of the Catholic faith, and having got certain notice, how, in imitation of their godly and worthy ancestors, they endeavour, by FORCE OF ARMS, to deliver their enthralled nation from the oppression of the *heretics*, and gallantly do in them that lieth to *extirpate, and totally root out*, those workers of iniquity, who in the kingdom of IRELAND had infected the mass of the Catholic purity with the pestiferous leaven of their heretical contagion: We therefore being willing with the gifts of those spiritual graces whereof we are ordained the *only disposers* on earth, and by virtue of that power of *binding and loosing* of souls which God was pleased to confer on us, to all and every one of the faithful Christians in the aforesaid kingdom of Ireland, now and for the time *militating* against heretics, do grant a full and plenary indulgence, and *absolute remission of all their sins*. Desiring heartily all the faithful in Christ, *now in arms*, to be partakers of this most *precious treasure*.—Dated at Rome, in the Vatican of St. Peter's Palace, May 25, 1643. A. M. MURALDUS.”*

It is proper here to state to you plainly, that this Bull granted a plenary indulgence and absolute remission of all sins to the wretches who carried that horrid slaughter of the Protestants into execution, known by the name of the Irish Massacre, and who perpetrated numberless other fearful crimes in the course of what is designated the Irish Rebellion. The project of the massacre was formed in March and April 1641. The Protestants knew nothing of it till the night before it took place, the 23d of October following. Having secured the principal gentlemen, and seized their effects, they murdered the common people without mercy. Many thousands fled naked into the bogs and woods, where they perished with hunger and cold. “Some they whipped to death; others they stripped naked and exposed them to shame, and then drove them like herds of swine to perish in the mountains; many hundreds were drowned in rivers; and some had their throats cut. With some, the execrable villains made them-

* Maturin's Sermons, pp. 135—139.

selves sport, trying who could hack deepest into an Englishman's flesh. Husbands were cut to pieces in the presence of their wives; wives and young virgins abused in the sight of their nearest relations; nay, they taught their children to strip and kill the children of the English, and dash out their brains against the stones. Forty or fifty thousand were massacred after this manner in a few days, without distinction of age, sex, or quality, before they suspected their danger, or had time for their defence."* Such were the atrocious cruelties which filled the pope with gratitude and joy, and led him to grant the indulgence stated in the preceding Bull.

But the Church of Rome has nothing to boast of in this doctrine, it was the occasion of the commencement of her fall. Every reader of history knows to what I allude—knows that it was the scandalous sale of indulgences which led directly to the Reformation from Popery. Who has not heard of the infidel pope, Leo X. who sat at that time in the professed chair of St. Peter, and of the profligate minions whom he sent through Europe upon an embassy so base and so profane? Who has not heard of Tetzels, and in what manner he executed his commission in Germany in 1517?—This man carried a box with him, and whoever put into it about the value of ten shillings had licence to eat flesh in Lent, and power to deliver whatever souls he pleased out of purgatory. He boasted that he had saved more souls by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching. He impudently boasted that his indulgences could obtain the pardon of any sin however great.†

The cup of iniquity was now full. God rose out of his place to rebuke his adversaries, and to visit Zion. Luther and others with him took the lead, and began openly to expose and struggle for the overthrow of wickedness so flagrant. The attack was made at first not against the whole fabric, but against the grossest evils of Popery, especially the sale of indulgences. For a time, the Pope paid no attention to the rumoured Reformation; but considered it merely as skirmishes

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. I. p. 593.

† "Etiam si matrem Dei stuprasset."

among the monks, which generally ended in nothing. It was considerably advanced before he took the alarm, and when he found that all his power could not check its progress, he was pained and confounded. The opposition spread like lightning from one end of heaven to the other; so that in a few years more than the half of Europe was separated from the communion of the Church of Rome.* These are notorious historic facts, which even Papists will hardly seek to contradict; but these facts should speak to their hearts, and make them ashamed of a connexion so base, so dishonourable, so wicked. Why, possessed of common sense and ordinary information, should one of them hesitate for a moment. Let them spurn with indignation the degrading yoke from their necks: Popery must be abandoned so soon as men begin to act as rational beings.

I proceed, in the last place, to give you a brief account of the *Persecuting spirit* of the Church of Rome. This has been repeatedly referred to. The cruelty of Popery is one of its most prominent features, as the history of the last twelve hundred years demonstrate. The woman, as the Scriptures testify, has been drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It is neither false nor imaginary, to charge her with a merciless and murderous disposition, and the head of that church has ever encouraged the extirpation of heretics at whatever expense, and has ever manifested pleasure at their death by whatever means. Nor is there much difficulty in accounting for this—it is submission, absolute submission which the Papal Church demands of her votaries. If her communion is forsaken, she has but one way of converting those who have deserted it—if that she dare resort to.

A system of truth suffers nothing by development; it courts the light, and seeks for investigation; while a system of error, domination, and ruin, avoids, if possi-

* See Fleming on the Rise and Fall of the Papacy. Also Culbertson's Lectures on the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. The three volumes published by this excellent author on the book of the Revelation are an invaluable treasure—are, from beginning to end, worthy the serious and repeated perusal of every Christian. Let the man who wishes to know what Popery is, carefully peruse the two last volumes of Culbertson on the Revelation.

ble, such a scrutiny. It penetrates the thick shades of night; darkness is its element, and concealment its safety. To begin to investigate, is like carrying a flambeau into a den of robbers and murderers, who look upon such a visitor as the shadow of death. If their deeds of wickedness are not now to come abroad, the flambeau must be extinguished, and the intruder slain. There is something so silly, so ridiculous, so false, so wicked, and so monstrous in the religion of Popery, that, if fairly exposed, the fabulous nature and ruinous tendency of it must become evident. The discovery brings destruction to the system along with it; therefore the only way to maintain the dominion is to keep men ignorant; and if this cannot be done, they must, if she dare lift a finger against them, suffer for their pains. This is one cause of her opposition to the circulation of the Scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel of Christ. At Ephesus, the gospel took away the hope of gain, and of influence, from those who were sinfully employed; it will ever do so: hence the persecution against it. However it may be accounted for, it is a truth, that the spirit of persecution is interwoven with Popery, and forms a conspicuous part of the system. I would ask no more to satisfy any right-hearted man, that it is not, and cannot be, the religion of heaven which publishes and promotes peace on earth wherever it comes.

But to prove the point, the plainest and nearest way is to mention a few facts, selected from thousands of a similar kind, without entering into a detail of the history of the Jesuits, or of the inquisition, or of the Bulls of the Popes which have sometimes led immediately into insurrection and bloodshed, or to different crusades which have drenched whole districts with the blood of men. Meantime, bear it in mind, that, in accordance with the tenets of the Church of Rome, she has the power on earth to disallow the free exercise of *private judgment*, that is, that the Pope and his clergy have it in their power to consign to infamy all who presume to find in the Word of God any doctrine which the Church of Rome does not teach; or who find that some of the doctrines of that church are contrary to what they read in the Bible. As a proof of this, it is well known that a countless multitude have, in different countries, been by

her put to death for no other reason than exercising their *private judgment*. They would not believe in the infallibility of the church, or that a consecrated wafer was God, and therefore they were not permitted to live. The Waldenses were a people of this description, and in the beginning of the thirteenth century a considerable number of the towns in the south of France were principally occupied by them.

“It was then that that haughty pontiff, Innocent III. sat in the Papal chair. By every possible artifice he endeavoured to arm the princes and the people of Europe against the peaceable disciples of Jesus. He determined by fire and sword to extirpate them. Indulgences and future rewards were held out to those who would engage to accomplish his object, which was to render the civil and the religious authorities of those heretical provinces entirely subject to his will, and the crusade in consequence advanced. The city of Beziers was first captured by the insurgents; and its inhabitants, amounting to many thousands, after a few hours were no more. The siege of Circassone was a more costly enterprise to the assailants, but its intrepid defenders, and its harmless multitudes, were to disappear before the power of the fanatics. Nor was the system of outrage commenced with this infuriated feeling of short duration. Extending over the provinces of southern France, it was perpetuated for more than twenty years, exhibiting a combination and continuance of crime, to which the annals of civilized heathenism could scarcely supply a parallel, and which is supposed to have swept away at least a million of lives,”*

Towards the close of the seventeenth century a most barbarous persecution was carried on against the French Protestants, under the reign of Louis XIV. The most horrible cruelty was practised against all who would not acknowledge the truth of transubstantiation. They “were outlawed, robbed, imprisoned, banished, sent to the galleys, dragooned, tortured, and put to death.” Like the infuriated Saul who haled both men and women into prison, and compelled them to blaspheme, so were

* Wickliffe's Life, vol. I. pp. 150, 151.

those Protestants beaten and dragged to the mass. "Such as rejected the host were condemned to be burnt alive; the bodies of those who refused the sacrament when dying, were carried forth in hurdles and thrown into the common sewers." "Infants were taken from their mother's breasts, and left to die of crying and hunger, within hearing of their distracted mothers, separated from them only by a thin partition." "Daniel Chamier, a clergyman, was broken upon the wheel in a most cruel manner; they gave him fifty blows of the iron bar upon the scaffold, and allowed him to linger three days in the most exquisite torture before they gave him the finishing blow on the breast. Homel, another divine, aged seventy-one, was broken alive on the wheel at Tournou. He received forty blows of the iron bar; and, after every limb was broken, he was kept alive forty-eight hours. When reduced to this miserable condition, his merciless tormentors asked him, if he would die a Roman Catholic? He answered, 'Had it been my design to have changed my religion, I would have done it before my bones were broken in pieces.' He died full of faith and hope, forgiving his judges and torturers." Not less than a hundred thousand were murdered, and very many fled a country thus stained with their brethren's blood.

The worst is yet to be told. For this inhumanity "Louis had the highest eulogiums bestowed on him for his holy zeal in extirpating heresy, by the whole Popish clergy and priest-ridden bigots of that time, who represented this bloody persecution as the most glorious achievement of his reign. The bishop of Valence, in a harangue addressed to him in the name of the convention of the Gallican clergy, compliments him with the title of '*the great restorer of the faith, and extirpator of heresy.*' The extirpation of heresy '*infinitely surmounted all his other glorious titles.*' Innumerable medals, statues, and triumphal arches appeared, exhibiting the hero in the magnanimous attitude of crushing the hydra under his feet." As for his holiness, Pope Innocent XI. he wrote Louis a very complimentary letter, calling him "his dearest son in Christ, the most Christian king of France, acknowledging his good services, and celebrating his piety and zeal in the warmest

strains." The following is an extract from the Pope's letter:—

"We thought it was incumbent upon us most largely to commend that excellent piety of yours, by the remarkable and lasting testimony of these our letters, and to congratulate your majesty on that accession of immortal commendation, which you have added to all your other exploits, by so illustrious an act of this kind. The Catholic Church shall most assuredly record, in her sacred annals, a work of such devotion towards her, and celebrate your name with never-dying praises."*

Till lately, if not even now, Protestants in France were subject to a fine who did not bow before the host when it was carried through the streets; or, if they refused to decorate their houses in the way Papists do upon the occasion. Papists have nothing of this kind to suffer living among Protestants. Every liberty is granted them, without any annoyance. In some of their publications they have Elizabeth, for example, on the frontispieces represented as burning in flames. This is common in Dublin; but, were a Protestant to act thus, and exhibit any of the Popes in this manner in Spain or Italy, he would soon smart for it.

It is perfectly within your own recollection, what a cruel, prolonged, and unprovoked persecution, raged against the Protestants in the south of France, even so late as the year 1815. The following is quoted from an authentic account published at that time: "Places of worship are shut up through nearly the whole southern provinces of France. So many provinces laid waste! so many houses in flames! so many of our brethren mercilessly murdered! so many pastors without asylum and without bread! Alas! alas! Still let us adore the incomprehensible, but always wise, ways of Providence with resignation. Let us hope, and let us pray! We cannot tell how many have been butchered, because they are immediately buried; and the Protestants, shut up in their houses, cannot go out to make inquiries; but, certainly, *many hundreds* have been assassi-

* Spirit of the Church of Rome.

nated." Both in England and Scotland, many large collections were made for the relief of the surviving persecuted Protestants in France.

It were easy to enlarge; but the subject is so very appalling, and presents such a picture of injustice, violence, atrocity, and bloodshed, that I forbear. They talk like children who speak of Popery being changed in its spirit. Papists themselves inform us that the thing is impossible—that their church is the same. In this they tell us the truth. It is the same in its persecuting spirit, and will continue the same, until the Lord in mercy destroy it with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. To expect a reformation in Popery, is as hopeless as to expect that fire now-a-days will not burn you, should you put it in your bosom, although it did so in days of old. The contest between Jesus and the man of sin is not dropped. These parties are at war. No truce entered into; no terms of peace proposed. Each is seeking the mastery; and Christ—let us rejoice—Christ “shall prevail against his enemies.”

I think it proper to put you in mind that it is the *system of Popery* I have spoken of, and not of individuals who *professedly* adhere to it. Some of these, were they but fully aware of the spirit of their own religion, would instantly and for ever cease from supporting such a system of superstition and idolatry, aside from its barbarous cruelty. Of the evils of the *system* much more might be added; but I know nothing that has been advanced that is either false, unfair, or extravagant.

Having finished what I intended to state concerning the doctrines and practice of the Romish Church, I shall close these Lectures, after having, in next Discourse, shown you the Tendency, Decline, and Overthrow of Popery.

Learn, in the mean time, the importance of imbibing Scriptural views of the evil of sin and of the worth of redeeming blood. These, whether you combine or view them separately, will completely remove from your minds all thoughts of human merit—all expectation of gaining heaven by your own works. The saying may at first sound harsh, but there is much truth in it:

“*All men are born Papists.*” How congenial to the pride of our hearts is the doctrine of merit, which leads to view heaven itself as attainable by good works, without being altogether indebted for the boon to rich, free, sovereign grace! The question is not, Does the one humble man’s thoughts of himself, and the other exalt these? but rather, Which is God’s way of it? If man is to be saved at all, what does God declare concerning this salvation? That both plans cannot emanate from the same holy omniscient mind is obvious; that both cannot be parts of the same wisely-ordered and gracious scheme of the sinner’s salvation needs no proof; because the one stands opposed to the other. “If by grace, then *is it* no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.” But the Scripture hath concluded “all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” Nothing can be more explicit than this language to prove *all*, both Jews and Gentiles, *under sin*. This settles the matter with those who adhere to the words of divine inspiration. Human efforts, human assistance, human merit, can open no door of hope to the transgressor. The thing is plainly impossible. Since no man can help himself, how can he give assistance to his neighbour! “Under sin!—all under sin!” What fearful words are these! How grievous, how galling, how deadly the yoke! Crushed under its guilt, lying under its sentence, and awaiting its doom! No human power can deliver, or aid in delivering, from a burden so intolerable, from a prospect so dismal.

All mankind were thus circumstanced when God in pity gave his only-begotten Son to save the lost. Jesus took the sinner’s place, and died in the sinner’s stead. In the plan of man’s redemption, you see the hand of God at work. In the obedience, suffering, dying, and intercession of the Son of God, you see an everlasting righteousness wrought out and brought in. Here you

see the price of redemption paid down; and mercy and truth meet, righteousness and peace embrace. You see the guilty saved, and all the divine perfections glorified. Behold the building of mercy! It was his hand, not ours, that laid the foundation, reared the superstructure, and the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it! There is no discordant note in heaven. All shout, from the least to the greatest, "Thou art worthy to receive honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood." This, this is

"Heaven's eternal, universal psalm."

Again: The redeemed of the Lord are saved from the love, power, and practice of sin; therefore, the doctrine of indulgence is abhorrent to them. How exactly does this vile doctrine suit man in a state of nature—in love with sin, yet afraid of its consequences. By this scheme they can have their debt paid, and continue in the pleasures of sin. But, so far is the grace of God from leading to licentiousness, it teacheth us "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." It leads to the crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts; to the hatred and loathing of sin, of all sin, as well as to the forsaking of it in practice; and it leads to an entire consecration of heart to God, and to a life devoted to his service. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" O my friends! I ask you not, If you deny the doctrine of indulgence? but I do ask, If you have denied yourselves?—if the lives you live in the flesh be lives of faith upon the Son of God?—if the views you now have of sin be different from what they were?—and, if this difference has arisen in consequence of your looking to Jesus?

Finally, Learn that the religion of the holy Bible is contrary to every thing of a persecuting nature. It is a perfect stranger to such a spirit; yea, opposed to it in every form. If any of the friends of Jesus adopt it, with the view of promoting his cause, or from a zeal for his name's sake, they, in so far as they proceed in

this manner, act contrary to his command, and to the nature of his gospel. He himself is the Prince of peace; his kingdom is the kingdom of peace, and his gospel is the gospel of peace. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." He is "meek and lowly in heart." At the time his enemies were wreaking their cruel and uncalled-for vengeance upon him, he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The Jews were cruel persecutors; and Stephen, who had drunk into the spirit of his Master, prayed, while his enemies were stoning him to death, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Christians, imbibe this spirit, follow this example, and never harbour in your breasts rancour, malice, or revenge, against your bitterest enemies. If they hunger, feed them; if they thirst, give them drink. It is this demeanour we would most earnestly recommend you to show towards your relations or neighbours, who are members of the Church of Rome. Say not, We will browbeat, or threaten, or persecute them, out of their absurdities. This is not the plan to convert them from the error of their ways. Such conduct would be highly unbecoming and very sinful. To act thus would not change one of them, were they ten times more numerous than they are. Men will never embrace Christianity by such means; nor does ever Christianity direct to the use of them. You may have it in your power to do acts of kindness to Papists; if so, never lose the opportunity; but rather seek it, and rejoice to embrace it. You cannot love the tenets they hold; but you must love themselves, and show them, in every possible way, your ready, eager, and strong desire to do them every temporal favour; although from you, as yet, they may receive no spiritual advice. My friends, carry this simple admonition into daily practice, and there will be more hope of their conversion from Popery than if you had all the governments on earth set against them. By and by a door may be opened to you, to minister to them in other than in carnal things. The Lord hasten it in his time!

LECTURE IX.

ON THE TENDENCY, DECLINE, AND OVERTHROW OF THE POPISH RELIGION.

It was stated at the commencement of these Discourses, that I had no intention of entering upon a discussion of the *prophecies* which relate to Popery. The season called for another mode of procedure,—a mode which led us more immediately into the consideration of the pernicious tenets of the Romish Church, and which required much less time to answer the purpose we had in view. At the close of our work we have mentioned one topic, the final overthrow of Popery, which prophecy, strictly so called, aids greatly in contemplating. Indeed, when necessary, our supply from this source is ample, whether in viewing what has already been fulfilled, or what is yet to be accomplished. Justly has it been observed, “That the prophecies relating to Popery are the greatest, the most essential, and the most striking part of the Revelation. Whatever difficulty and perplexity there may be in other passages, yet here the application is obvious and easy. Popery being the great corruption of Christianity, there are, indeed, more prophecies relating to that than to almost any other distant event. It is the great object of Daniel’s, and the principal object of St. Paul’s, as well as St. John’s prophecies; and these, considered and compared together, will mutually receive and reflect light from and upon each other. It will appear to be clearly foretold, that such a power as that of the Pope should be exercised in the Christian Church, and should authorize and establish such doctrines and practices as are publicly taught and approved in the

Church of Rome. It is not only told that such a power should be exercised, but the place and the persons likewise are pointed out, where and by whom it should be exercised. Besides the place and the persons, the time also is signified when it should prevail, and how long it should prevail; and, at last, upon the expiration of this term it shall be destroyed for evermore.*

The tendency, decline, and overthrow of Popery are strikingly described by the angel; "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."† As this verse describes so exactly the different subjects we are about to discuss, it may not be improper, before proceeding to these, to explain the figurative language it contains.

In the book of the Revelation, Babylon is another word for Rome. Rome is mystical Babylon. Of old, Babylon was the greatest, the most flourishing, and the most idolatrous city on the face of the earth. For a long period, if not the only, it was the greatest commercial city in the world. Babylon was the mistress of kingdoms. But after having reached the height of her splendour, she began to decline; her end approached, and she became a heap of ruins. Where those formidable walls stood, which seemed from a distance like ridges of mountains; and where those lofty towers, those princely buildings and hanging gardens, were once found, no one can inform us now. The voice of the bridegroom is no more heard there, nor the light of a candle seen; but the satyrs dance there, and the wild beasts make their dens there. So is mystical Babylon destined to destruction. The streets of this figurative city are all those nations which were once, or are yet, under the spiritual dominion of Papal Rome.

"The wine of the wrath of her fornication" is an expression not so easily understood. Bishop Newton more correctly and intelligibly translates these words, "The inflaming wine of her fornication;" and Mr. Culbertson understands it in like manner, as meaning the

"poisonous or maddening qualities" of that cup which she gave the nations to drink. Like most of the figures found in this book, it is borrowed from the Old Testament. "Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."*

The words "is fallen," may be repeated for the same reason that Pharoah's dream was doubled—to signify the utmost certainty of the fulfilment of the prediction. Besides, they are the very words used to describe the fall of ancient Babylon. "And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."† A person full of joy or grief repeats with warmth the same words that may either delight or agonize him. With joy of heart the Church of God will proclaim the deliverance, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen;" while her friends and those who depended upon her, will howl for vexation of heart, repeating the same words at the sight of her overthrow.

Among Protestant theological writers there is no difference of opinion as to the time when this cry was first raised over mystical Babylon. The cry began to be raised at the Reformation from Popery, and it will never cease until Popery, like ancient Babylon, be no more. You have seen how gradually one corruption crept in after another, until the Papal Church came to what she was in the fourteenth century. The system rose by little and little till it reached its permitted height; so, most likely, will it fall by degrees, until it be utterly destroyed.

The "fornication" mentioned is the unholy doctrines of the Church of Rome, especially her idolatry, which not only here, but in many other places, is spoken of as fornication and adultery. She has forsaken the Lord Jesus, and submits no more to his government; she has chosen and set up others in his place, and has influenced many to forsake him by her flattery and her fraud.

I now proceed to the consideration of the *Tendency* of

* Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, p. 688.

† Rev. x v 8.

* Jer. li. 7.

† Isaiah xxi. 9.

the Popish religion. We are naturally led to contemplate this from its prevalence among the nations, its continuance for so long a time in the world, and the favour which too many have shown it. Observe then,

I. That the *gaudiness* of Popery has a mighty effect upon some minds. It attracts, allures, and inveigles the ignorant, thoughtless, and vain. They are caught in the net, wheedled into they know not what, ere they are aware. Look at the external grandeur which adorns even the ruins of Popish cathedrals. To this day, wherever they can reach it, their chapels are built with costly stones, and have something about them to attract, if possible, him that passeth by.* Enter, and they are decorated with pictures, embellished with figures of the saints, of the virgin, and even of our Saviour on the cross. Then you have something to please the ear by their artificial music. The tones of the organ, and the tinglings of the bells at the extremities of the priest—who would not fall down and worship at the hearing of such sounds! Their very apparel and outward badges of office, their retiring to robe themselves, and their returning in pompous parade, professing to attend to some divine ordinance, are all designed to ensnare, and certainly have this tendency upon such as look only on seen things. Then, again, what think you of their holy water, the palm-branch Sunday,† and their burning wax

* Let it not be supposed by the above remark, that the writer is an enemy to neatness, cleanliness, and comfort, in a place set apart for divine service. He thinks there ought to be something inviting, though not extravagant, about every house in which the ordinances of heaven are dispensed. Every thing approaching to sloth, indifference, or meanness, in such a place, is extremely disgusting and unbecoming;—not less so than an exhibition of gaudiness and superfluous waste.

† When a woman is delivered of a child, holy water is carried from the priest's house to her apartment, which is sprinkled therewith to keep away the *fairies*. It has been carried for miles into the country for this purpose.

On palm Sunday, every Papist gets a piece of a palm branch or twig, which he takes with him, and keeps carefully as a defence to his dwelling and his cattle from the nimble hands of *witches*. Now, while there may be, even among Papists, who put no trust either in holy water or a palm branch, who dread neither fairy nor witch—how shameful is it to nurse such superstition! It is high time it were spurned from the outskirts of the British isles.

candles at mid-day! Above all, the touch of the priest's finger, the blowing of the priest's breath, and the very spittle of the priest has something professedly sacred about it. The Lord pity them who are attracted and held by such tawdry trash!

II. The *anathemas* of the Popish Church have the tendency of keeping within her pale, ignorant and superstitious persons. Ignorance and superstition are nearly connected. Individuals of this description are easily made afraid, where no fear is. To keep such entangled, the most dismal curses are threatened to every one that forsakes the communion of the Romish Church. Their numerous, fearful, and often-repeated curses, breathe nothing but vengeance, resentment, and ruin. These take hold of the mind, and terror strikes it upon the first suggestion of a departure. Hence, in some instances of real conversion from Popery, the converts, for years after, have occasionally trembled, lest, after all, these heavy dreadful denunciations should fall upon them. If this is the case with some who have burst the bonds, what must be the terror where the yoke remains unbroken!

III. Popery struggles hard to keep the ground it has obtained. Wherever the system enters, it becomes, like a hurtful weed, exceedingly difficult to root out; and there are various causes which account for this. Such as—

1. Popery claims for itself a heavenly origin; yea, while it fosters every carnal desire, it professes to be the only true religion. Let any one believe this much, and you try in vain to loosen him from his false and dangerous moorings. He resembles the poor ragged maniac who imagines himself to be the king of Great Britain, having whole legions of soldiers under his sway. To tell him it is not the case, is to reason with the wind. His tattered rags are royal robes—his shaggy hair a crown of gold studded with pearls. You may pity him, or smile at his deceivings, but *he* is in good earnest. Just so it is here. No Papist can tell you the extent of his confession of faith; his church has never informed him; but then he believes all the church believes, with-

out even knowing what that is. The very acknowledgment that the Bible is *partly* their guide, is what is calculated to chain them down in their midnight cell, and to fix them in their dungeon of darkness. They dare not consult that book for themselves; if one of them were in earnest to do so, he ceases from that moment to be a member of the Church of Rome. While he continues in that communion, he must receive every thing at second hand; that is, he must receive as the truth of God what God never uttered, and what is opposed in every shape to all that ever God revealed. Tell him to search the Scriptures, and he will tell you that his church only has a right to interpret; that he would not presume to speak contrary to what the church has spoken—in a word, he is debarred from that exercise. But what then, Does he feel it a burden and a hardship? No; while he continues a Papist, he thinks he is in the right, and leaves the whole matter in the hands of his deceitful guides. He thinks all wrong who act otherwise, and is taught to believe so. Besides, there is no restraint laid upon his lusts—he may, according to that faith, be a Christian and live in any sin he pleases. The only sin that cannot be forgiven, is to forsake the Popish religion.

2. All intercourse of such a nature as might tend to the profit of the soul, is in a great measure cut off. You have no access to Papists. It is hardly possible for us to conceive with what jealousy, prejudice, and indignation, a true Papist will listen to any thing like religious counsel from a Protestant. Their priests teach them to view all but themselves as wolves in sheep's clothing. They, mighty men, they are the priests of the Lord, the successors of the apostles; and others who differ from them are deceivers. A great deal of this spirit is engendered in the minds of their people, who are entreated to consider every man as a deserter, and an apostate, who is not a Papist; and, while all others lie under the frown and the curse of God, to look upon themselves as the only favourites of heaven, and as exclusively possessing heaven's smiles and promises. They are especially to be on their guard against receiving any instruction, or taking any advice, from people of another faith. Hence all intercourse is cut off, and

Papists remain lodged behind their battlement of errors. They dare not hear but what their priest permits; they dare not believe but what he commands. Bring them fairly from behind this lodgement—let them hear for themselves the pure Word of God—let them ponder it, and from that hour they cease to be Papists. But here is the difficulty, and while held by it they resemble children in leading strings, passive kind of beings, turning hither and thither as the nurse pleases.

3. Those who in this country turn from Protestantism to Popery, do so, it is feared, from no reputable motives. The steps from their former to their present profession may be easily and certainly traced. One has been guilty of a breach which the church he was connected with would not altogether overlook. He goes where no notice of the kind is taken of such delinquency, and where what he calls absolution may be had at an easier rate—where nothing is necessary to discipleship but to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope, and the omnipotency of his clergy.

Suppose another case—a young man, loud and talkative withal, void of understanding, but wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. His dissipated habits, impudence, and destitution of right principles, speak for themselves. This redoubtable youth takes it into his head to visit a priest, and then thinks it will make him something to become a Papist. He returns, telling by way of boast, where he has been. His silly common-place questions are tiresome, and his impertinence is disgusting; it is evident, if he was in earnest with the priest, he is sporting with you. It becomes proper, and even requisite, to let him know that, if he has nothing else to talk about, he had better not repeat his visits. He knows as much of Hindooism as he does of Popery, but it suits his habits, and he settles down a Papist.

Again: A young woman, whose religious instruction has been totally neglected, marries a Papist, and immediately becomes one. But she makes no secret of the thing;—she goes to the chapel to please her new relations—she likes it well, and there the matter ends.

I believe these three descriptions of persons engross all, or almost all, that are ever converted to the system

of Popery. Even of these there are not many; but judge of the difficulty of such persons returning from that idolatrous worship. The first goes off through chagrin and wounded pride—Popery fosters that. The second chooses it in his waggy; he knows not why, but it is to his taste. And the third in very blindness turns a Papist, to answer a purpose, while she knows not the difference between Popery and Protestantism.

4. While every thing is done to keep from Protestant influence, all pains are taken to instruct the young in the tenets of the church, and to confirm those who are farther advanced. And here I know not well whether to speak in terms of approbation or reprobation; but so it is that Popish parents, and, I believe I may add, Popish priests, pay a great deal more attention to the instruction of their offspring and people than Protestant parents and ministers generally do. Before the children can well speak, they are initiated into the dogmas of that abominable religion. They can no sooner open their mouths than the poisonous draught is administered. While yet upon the knees of their mothers, they are taught to say "Hail Mary," and are instructed about purgatory, penance, and the seven sacraments. The system is thus fixed in their minds from their infancy, which, often through life, they continue to cling to. Take a family of children, one of whose parents is a Protestant and the other a Papist, you will soon discover which parent has been at most pains.

Besides, it must be acknowledged that, in some respects, Papists are a most devoted people. Necessity is laid upon them to be at mass every Sabbath; and, in a Popish country, you may see invalids creeping slowly onwards to the chapel at an early hour, who are ill able to leave home at all. Others, who cannot go, are not unfrequently carried by their stronger neighbours, to be at least laid at the door of the place of worship, while the service is going on. It is seldom you see such zeal manifested for the house of prayer among Protestants. A headach, or very slight cold, will sometimes form excuse enough for absence. The cases are not rare when the house of God is forsaken to spend the day in pleasure; and if there be not every thing to suit, to remain at home of choice. Nothing of all this is found among Papists, which may

easily teach us the strong hold the system has of their minds.

But it should teach us a more salutary lesson. Will those who are the devotees of Popery, the slaves of antichrist, really give more attention to youth than we who profess the religion of Jesus Christ? Up, Protestants, rouse you to your duty. These are not the times to leave your offspring half taught, or destitute of the knowledge of Christian principles. Listen to the watchword, and be provoked to zeal and to diligence by those who are no people, and by those who are a foolish nation. As you lie down and as you rise up, teach your children the ways of the Lord. The great enemy is abroad in search of their immortal souls—bring them to the great Shepherd who is able to defend and to save.

And how ought the diligence of Papists to rebuke our sloth in attending to divine things? They have many holidays besides the Sabbath, and every thing is laid aside to attend to the mummeries of their heathen church; and can you scarcely find time to devote God's own day to God's own worship? Must you even then speak your own words and do your own works? Tell not this in Gath—not a Papist can be found whose conduct rings not a reproof in your ears. You are acting contrary to the Word of God; repent of this your wickedness, and flee to the blood that speaketh peace.

IV.—Another tendency of Popery is to enslave the minds of those who adhere to it. It is impossible to receive as truths certain tenets of the Romish Church, say Transubstantiation, without the subversion of all right reason, and the giving up of every thing like the proper exercise of the mental faculties. The mind that receives this, and such like, must be clouded and fettered—must be prepared to receive truth and falsehood alike; yea, possible and impossible things with equal readiness, provided they emanate from the lips of a priest. How far removed from this state of vassalage is that noble and inquisitive, that independent and heavenly turn of mind which Christ Jesus teaches his

followers to cultivate : " Call no *man* your father upon the earth ; for one is your Father, which is in heaven." *

V.—Another most mischievous tendency of Popery is its leading directly to the neglect and despising of the Word of God. The record of heaven stands no higher in the estimation of Papists than the word of man, and not so high ; for if the Bible say any thing contrary to the church, the church must be believed in preference. It does not tell upon Popish consciences that the Lord has said so and so ; for if the meanest and most profligate priest say otherwise, he must be believed rather than God. Once more,

VI.—Popery leads to the eternal destruction of the soul. It is with much sorrow of heart I make this remark ; but justice cannot be done to the subject were it omitted. Its immediate tendency is to lead away from Christ the only Saviour, and to entangle the soul in the rubbish of unavailing ceremonies. I call not in question the sincerity of Papists ; I believe the most of them think their religion " the only true one, and the only safe one ;" but this only makes their case the more deplorable, as it shows the strong delusion under which they lie. But if salvation is only to be obtained, and can only be obtained by " depending solely and entirely on the finished work of Jesus Christ, then Popery rejects this as the sole ground of dependance, and directs its deluded adherents to depend less or more upon their own merit, and the merits of some whom they call saints."

Let us now take a view of the *Decline* of Popery. The power and influence of the Bishop of Rome and his clergy exceeded at one time any thing that was ever known amongst men by these names. At their pleasure kings and emperors were deposed, whole kingdoms loosed from their allegiance to their rightful sovereigns, and the riches of nations turned from their proper channels to flow in the direction of Rome. Amidst all this tyranny, oppression, and robbery, no murmur must be heard, no complaint raised. The church claimed autho-

* Matth. xxiii. 9.

rity to settle the future destinies of men, as well as their present condition. She could at pleasure open and shut the very gates of the kingdom of heaven. Thus she glorified herself, and said in her heart, " I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." * But these days have all long since passed away, and she now stoops to the nations which she formerly contemned. She dares no longer crave in the most humble manner what she used proudly to demand as her right ; and his Holiness instead of being adored, is no longer consulted in State affairs. His threats and thunders are unheeded and despised.

The truth of the decline of Popery may be founded on another argument—the demoralizing nature of the system. It will be found in the history of nations from the beginning of time, that as the people became wicked they hastened their own ruin. There is a height of iniquity beyond which the great God will not permit them to proceed. When the people have filled up the cup of their iniquity, then will the land spue out its inhabitants ; and when God has risen out of his place to punish such nations, and their glory begins to fade, nothing can prevent their final overthrow. So it is in the case before us. At the Reformation, God rose to punish the enemies of his church, and began to pour out the vials of wrath upon mystical Babylon. St. Peter's boasted chair shook to its centre, the cause of Popery received a blow it has never recovered. It has declined ever since, and will continue to decline till it disappear altogether.

I am aware it may be replied to this, that the aspect of affairs, and the activity of Papists, seem to argue against such a conclusion. That they are more active and zealous throughout Great Britain at the present time than they have been for ages, is a fact that will not conceal, and ought not to be concealed from Protestants of every name. That the wall of separation between Protestants and Papists in Ireland is at this moment thicker and higher, and more formidable than it ever appeared before, is a circumstance that seems to indicate only terror ; but mark carefully the legitimate

* Rev. xviii. 7.

conclusion—ask, Whence this mighty stir among Popish priests to oppose the Protestant cause? It is to my mind the clearest proof that they have lost ground, and are afraid of losing more. In not a few instances they gnaw their tongues with pain, because the hope of their gains is departing; and well they know, they must and shall depart as true knowledge circulates. Now, think on the mighty engines at work in the present day through the length and breadth of that land. Thousands, and hundreds of thousands, have been of late years taught to read, and have been supplied with copies of the holy Scriptures. There are, besides, Sabbath School, Tract, and Evangelical, Societies all in active operation. There are also a number of pious men employed, called readers, who, with the Word of God in their hands, go from cabin to cabin in the dark places of Ireland, reading to the poor inmates the words of inspiration, and leading them by degrees to see that the Popish religion is an imposture.

Some may suppose that little has been accomplished by all these societies—to prove the contrary, I would refer to the alarm the Popish priests have taken. You may rest assured had all been quiet and the walls of their defence secure, they would not have been roused to such wrath. They may lament the stir who please, we consider it as a token for good, and should be sorry to hear of its ceasing except by the rooting out of Popery from that truly interesting country; nor will it cease till this be the case. I entertain no fears regarding the *ultimate* issue of the present contest. God will fight with them who fight for him. And is not the circulation of the Scriptures God's work, as certainly as the Bible is God's book?—The Evangelical Society has for its object the preaching of the everlasting gospel. God has commanded his gospel to be preached, and he will bless it also. The aim of the Hibernian and Sabbath School Societies, is to train up youth in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and is not this a good work? Let the man of sin scour his rusty armour, and muster all his forces for the battle—the Angel of the covenant has gone forth, and he shall prevail. Triumph awaits all his steps of majesty. Who shall stem the

rising tide, or quench the light of day? The arm of the Lord is omnipotent.

So far as this country is concerned, it shows a determination and hardihood of spirit worthy a better cause, for any man, or any number of men, to stand forth and publish openly the tenets of the Church of Rome. To suppose that a people who dare think, and who do think, for themselves, will receive them, is taking far too much for granted. Were Protestants left to sit still without defending the truth; were they to appear as men without energy and without armour, given up to a spirit of slumber and indifference about their civil and religious privileges, then might the horns of the beast push afresh against them, and the mark of the beast be found again on their hands and on their foreheads; but, if Protestants be kept alive to their best interests, and advocate the cause of truth in a Christian manner as they ought, the struggle may be keen, but not of long continuance. When the devil rises in great wrath, it is a token that the contest is near a close. Mystical Babylon, like the city of Jericho, is destined to utter destruction. Woe to the man that covets a golden wedge or Babylonish garment that belongs to the mother of harlots!

Again—If you examine the history of those countries where the seat of the beast is, you will find its power wonderfully decayed and shrivelled; which furnishes us with another proof of the decline of Popery. In most instances, the people are indifferent about the maintaining of the system—at least compared to what they were once. At the very head-quarters of Popery, you find, says one, “A clergy without learning—a nobility without education—a commonalty without occupation—a population without subsistence—a mass of mendicants without number—indolence, beggary, sensuality, and superstition.”* A people of this descrip-

* The above description is confirmed in a letter, of date “19th March, 1834,” written by a Scottish gentleman, travelling at that time in Italy. After informing his friend to whom he wrote, of his having seen high mass—the ceremony of blessing candles, horses, asses, lambs, &c. he adds: “I fairly and solemnly declare, that I never saw such absurdity and mummary; nor did I believe that

tion are not prepared for active service. In other countries, such as France, an effort is making to educate the young, and to supply them with the Scriptures, which will work in another manner against the interests of Popery. An article appeared not long ago in the *Christian Observer*, which may give you an idea of the position of affairs in that country. "The Abbé de la Mennais, in proof of the disbelief of the youth of France in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, states, that he recently detected *forty* of the students of the College of Paris, when at mass, secreting the consecrated wafer, instead of swallowing it; and, that they wrote letters to their friends, informing them what they had done, and closing their letters with the wafers instead of wax." As information increases, the absurdity of the Popish doctrines will become more and more manifest.

If you look at prophecy—antichrist must fall. It is as clearly revealed as that there will be a judgment-day. There has been a remarkable fulfilment of ancient predictions in the rise, advancement, and elevation of

such blasphemous ceremonials existed in any country, or could be tolerated in any Christian land, or amongst any thinking people. But so it is; and yet no one believes in it. In fact, there is no religion (principle of it I mean) in Italy. The whole maintenance of the pope's government depends upon these follies; for he and the higher orders of the church must know, and I have heard many well-informed Roman Catholics admit, that they are follies; but still the government cannot venture to give them up, or to offer any sort of change whatever, lest it should cause people to think, confident that, if they did so, it would run the risk of being upset. I think these fears carry them too far; and they prove it to me to be an unprincipled and hypocritical government. But, then, it exactly accords with the character of the people, which is universally bad; and the Roman is the worst among the bad. The people do not wish to think, and still less so if they believe in their religion; because it is very comfortable to have their consciences discharged by confession and forgiveness once a-quarter, without trouble, except as to fees, which they must 'beg, borrow, or steal;' and, if the latter, then a mass must be said to obtain forgiveness—so that the poor wretch must take care to steal enough to enable him to pay the church. Thus no improvement can take place in the morality or information of the people, until the government is changed, for its existence depends on the ignorance and superstition of the people, and its pecuniary support upon their profligacy." The letter concludes thus: "As to Rome and its dependencies, the devil rides triumphant, and is the pope's best friend."—S. G.—*May 23, 1834.*

the man of sin. What is said respecting his farther disgrace and final destruction will meet with an accomplishment equally remarkable. We may not be able to fix the precise period, but as so much has been done already, it cannot be very distant. The Lord will hasten the time when Babylon shall be rased, and become an utter desolation. One event is rapidly succeeding another, and each doing something to lessen Popish influence, and remove completely that great barrier to the universal diffusion of the blessed gospel.*

I shall close this part of the subject with an extract from a work to which allusion has been formerly made. Referring to the Church of Rome, the author remarks, that, "Once her opulence was not less than her power. Every ship that traversed the seas brought her wealth; every horn that sounded at the gates of the seven-hilled city announced homage; every breeze that blew beneath the canopy of heaven fanned the standard of the triple crown; and wherever that standard waved, it waved triumphant. Such, not more than four hundred years ago, was the Church of Rome in her day of greatness, glory, and crime. What is she now? The same. The same—cry her adherents; the same in spirit, if not in power. That she is the same in spirit, I readily acknowledge, and bitterly lament; but can the most desperate and blinded bigot close his eyes against the obvious and increasing decline of her power.

"She was indeed a proud and glorious galley, the burden and the terror of the great deep; but she lies on its waters now, a dismantled hulk. Her pendant sweeps the seas no more;—the strong blast of the Reformation hath rent away mast and mainsail, rope and rudder. The mighty rushing winds of heaven are abroad, and assail her from every point of the compass. England, Scotland, all the north, and half the east of Europe, hold her in chase; and every shot they send through her rotten timbers threatens to make her a wreck. On she drives before the storm and the foe,

* Mr. M'Gavin emphatically remarks that, "but for Popery, the gospel might long ere now have been preached and believed throughout the whole world, as we hope it will be when Popery is destroyed."

while her mariners, with desperate infatuation, run up and down her decks crying, 'All's well—all's well! We hold the true course—we are certain of the port!' Till she strikes—she strikes; and she, her mariners, and her passengers, go down together for ever."*

After considering the decline of Popery, very little seems necessary to be said on the last thing that comes under our review—its *final Overthrow*. One thing we pretend not to determine—the precise time in which this shall take place. It is most certain from both Testaments that the *extent* of time for the reign of the man of sin is fixed to a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, and could we say exactly when these commenced, it would be easy to say when they will terminate. Commentators have erred egregiously in this matter, by professing to be wise above what is written. Some have fixed upon one period, and others upon another, both for the rise and the downfall of spiritual Babylon. Upon the seat of the beast, the vials of the wrath of God have been long pouring out; but when the dregs thereof may be emptied, no one can say. The day will declare it.

It is also very certain that while much has been done to eradicate the evil, a great deal yet remains to be accomplished. The temporal power of the bishop of Rome is gone. He dares not now assume those proud titles, or that overbearing attitude, which set him above all the temporal, as well as spiritual, affairs of princes. Were he now to presume to dictate, or to profess to bless or curse as he was wont, it would only produce the grin of ridicule.

But there is, nevertheless, very much to achieve before all men cease to be held in *spiritual* bondage by this tyrant. When the great city over which he has reigned shall be levelled with the dust, happy that individual, thrice happy that society, that will then be found having neither part nor lot in Babylon! "Come out of her, my people," is the call of God. Let all his saints hear and obey. The destruction of the system of Popery involves in it much more than perhaps any of us can at

present clearly comprehend. Doubtless, every thing *allied* to Popery, in whatever community it may be found, and every connexion which the church has with the world, of a forbidden kind, must be broken off. The church will stand forth *HERSELF*, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as *an army* with banners." Made perfect through Christ's comeliness, she needs no meretricious attire. On the other hand, all who lent their aid to the mother of abominations, must either abandon their connexion with her, or perish in her communion, when she is stript bare and burnt up with fire. The more narrowly this subject is investigated, the more evident it will appear that many changes must take place, many overturnings be witnessed, before Zion is thoroughly purged, and the earth filled with the glory of the Lord. But whatever obstacles may intervene, we are sure the event will take place; and that for a long, long uninterrupted season, the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ in another sense than any kingdom under the sun can at this moment be said to be.

As to the *manner* in which this glorious result shall be brought about—there are two separate views taken of it by those who write on Scripture prophecy. Some think that in the fall of Babylon there will be no external violence, or strong convulsions agitating the earth; but that she will consume away before the word of the Lord, that her errors will be renounced by the people, and her priests resign them—"that stone after stone will drop out of the building which has taken ages to rear, and no hand will be found to replace them—that the last worshipper will depart from the desecrated shrine, and the doors be shut for ever and for ever." Others are of a different mind. They consider that the Lord will purge his house with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning; that, as the great whore and murderess has defiled many, and has made herself drunk with the blood of saints, she will therefore have blood given her to drink. Some of the most judicious, learned, and pious writers on this point, are decidedly of opinion, that Rome and the places around it shall be burnt up with fire; that the strong language made use of both in Daniel's prophecy and in the book of the Reve-

* Mat. Ser. pp. 143, 144.

lation, warrants them to conclude that a punishment unusually severe, even resembling that of Sodom, awaits that foul and bloody land; that at the final expiration of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, Rome, with all its magnificence, will be absorbed in a lake of fire, sink into the sea, and rise no more for ever; and that judgments, although not equally painful and destructive, await all those ten kingdoms that have given their power to the beast—until every root and branch and vestige of the satanic system be torn up and completely destroyed.

It appears to us, that, in that day, there will be a bright display both of mercy and of judgment—of mercy in the proclamation and success of the gospel throughout the world, and of judgment upon those who knew not and prized not the day of God's long-suffering.

But which ever view is taken, there can be but one mind as to the issue. Babylon must fall and rise no more, while the kingdom of Christ is to fill the face of the whole earth. You may be assured that satan will not willingly quit his last stronghold, that the end will not come without a mighty struggle; but when the great Leader goes forth, clothed with zeal like a cloak, he will return victorious. Glory to God.

Having finished these Lectures, I beg your indulgence for a few moments while I state, that they have been composed amidst other numerous labours and engagements, and I am not unconscious of some of their imperfections. I am, however, unconscious of having for once harboured, or manifested, a spirit of rancour or ill will against a single member of the Church of Rome. If guilty of this, I would not blush to ask both your forgiveness and his. Neither am I conscious of having stated any thing but what is strictly true. My path lay straight forward, and I have endeavoured to pursue it, without being diverted from the course. My aim has been to lay a plain statement of facts before you; and I know of no motive that could prompt to act otherwise. With the question that has agitated the kingdom from end to end since the commencement of these Lectures, I have not meddled, however nearly it might seem to be connected with some of the topics that have come under our consideration.

From the number and length of these Discourses, I have felt both surprised and gratified—surprised at your unwearied patience, and gratified by your deep attention. These have more than compensated for all the previous preparation required; and I shall be farther gratified and recompensed, if they be the means of leading any to examine more minutely the difference that exists between Popery and the religion of the Bible.

For the great readiness which not a few kind friends manifested in supplying me with publications which I had not of my own, and in otherwise lending me every possible aid, I do most sincerely thank them.

But we must not part thus. We must not part without uniting in giving God ALL the glory. To him alone it is due. Even our *civil* privileges flow solely from this source; and how thankful we should be that we have governors set over us who seek the peace, the liberty, and the comfort of the subjects of this realm. Were they otherwise disposed, it would still be our part to pray for them; but as matters stand, how obvious, how binding the duty to pray for the king as supreme, and for those who rule under him.

Especially let us bear in mind that God has given us many *Christian* privileges. Let us prize them, and bless the Bestower. We can meet when and where we please, without any seeking to make us afraid. As families we may surround the throne of grace, and set up an altar to the God of Abraham, and not one will attempt to give the least annoyance. For decency and order's sake, we may shut our doors; but not from the fear of any foe. We may be active in circulating the truth, and zealous for the Lord of hosts, without requiring to flee into the wilderness and uninhabited land for shelter. We may meet as churchmen or as dissenters, or promiscuously together, without any foreign interference. If any one, through imprudence, should intermeddle, which we little suspect, we might hear his threats and view his displeasure with great composure. If moved at all, it would be with pity for the man who would attempt to wreath around our necks the galling chain which our fathers, by God's blessing, broke, and which we, by God's blessing, are determined never, never to submit to. It is no favour for one puny mortal

to let another think, and judge, and act for himself. Our heavenly Father has freely bestowed this as a common birthright on all, and he who interferes can only be regarded as one that meddles with what does not belong to him.

But, my dear friends, amidst our many privileges, let us take good heed what use we make of them. Where much is given, much shall be required. God who is now so kind in giving so much, will, ere long, call upon us to give in an account of our stewardship. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive a sentence according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil. This is a weighty consideration to all, especially to us, and ought to lead us most seriously to inquire what we are doing with our Bible, our Sabbaths, our substance, and our means of grace. You have been told the difference between Protestant and Popish principles; but if you prize not your advantages, it will be worse with you than with them who are otherwise situated. Some are so little impressed with this, are so little apprized of the value of religious privileges, as to think there is no harm in resorting *for once* to a Popish chapel. Are such really so ignorant as not to know that this is to break the Sabbath-day, and dishonour the true God? A very different conduct, indeed, is demanded from every Protestant. Individuals may exclaim, "This is to curb liberty of conscience"—far from it—does conscience approve? or is conscience consulted in the affair?—It is not conscience, but curiosity or something worse that leads in that direction. Instead of bending one step towards Rome, and thereby countenancing and emboldening fellow-townsmen in their dreary, dismal, hell-ward path, every one ought rather to seek to pluck them like brands from the burning, who are held in the embraces of a harlot so vile and so impudent, without knowing or feeling the bondage which holds them so fast, and is accomplishing their ruin so rapidly. Count me not your enemy for telling you the truth; nor take it in evil part when I add, that, however feeble, my most decided testimony is lifted up against such conduct. O let us, not by any species of persecution, nor by evil speaking, or railing accusation,

but by united prayer and becoming conduct, seek the conversion of Papists; but if they will not come to us, we must not go to them.

There is one parting advice I would, above all others, repeat and press upon those present who are still strangers to the power of godliness—that *they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls*. And with all the earnestness I can express, with all the fervour I can command, and with all the affection of a friend, I would urge it upon your attention. You need salvation; Jesus is able to save. He died to redeem, and he waits to be gracious. He intimates to you from heaven in a voice loud as thunder, and tender as mercy can express it, that there is immediate *danger*, and in the very midst of the warning points to the place of *safety*, calls you, in the mildest and most urgent accents, calls you to HIMSELF: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." O, my poor fellow-sinners, what precious words are these! They contain what we need, all we need, and have enough in them to make us happy in time, and blessed through eternity. O take the advice they give, and you will not be left destitute of the good they promise!

I shall rejoice to learn that, by what you have lately heard, you are better prepared to advocate the cause of Protestantism, and that you see more evidently the difference between it and Popery; I shall rejoice if you love the former system better than before, and keep at an increased distance from Popish influence;—but if this be all that is gained, and here the matter terminate—there is so much left behind, that the labourer, so far as you are concerned, must take up his lamentation, and bitterly bewail the spending of his strength for nought and in vain. Nothing can meet your exigency—nothing, nothing can prevent your everlasting destruction but a saving interest in Christ. The wrath to come is hastening on—it approaches with awful rapidity—it will certainly and suddenly overtake every impenitent sinner; and if once overtaken by it—farewell to

the possibility of escape—all is over—is over for eternity.

And shall we close in this manner? No; we address to you Christ's own most importunate language: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The door of mercy is not yet shut. We point you to it with trembling, lest you refuse to enter—with joy we point you to it, because your entrance is still possible. While the arms of mercy are stretched out, we beseech you to flee to their embrace; and so long as the Saviour says concerning you, "Yet there is hope"—with ecstasy of joy we echo in your ears the blissful sound, "Yet there is hope"—a thousand, and a thousand times we would utter it, that the message may neither be slighted, nor the impression erased. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Do then consider your ways, and seek the Lord while he may be found. O be not satisfied with a religion that will flee like a shadow, and leave you without a shelter, or a prop, in the day you most require its aid! Take warning; be wise; be instructed. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Amen.

THE END.

By the same Author.

1. MEMOIR of AGNES R——.

"It is distinguished particularly by the interesting view it gives of a conscience awakened to the exceeding sinfulness of sin."—*Christian Herald*, Feb. 1826.

2. MEMOIR of JOHN BURNET.

"The sketch has all the appearance of a portrait drawn directly from life, and the character it delineates is both original and interesting."—*Ibid.* April, 1827.

3. SERIOUS ADDRESSES to UNPROFITABLE HEARERS of the GOSPEL.

"The volume deserves the company of Baxter's Call, or Alleine's Alarm; less terrible than either, it is more tender; less powerful in motives to flee, it is more fraught with light to guide the sinner's footsteps to Jesus."—*The World*, May 12, 1830.

"These enlightened and solemn appeals to the judgment and conscience, combine the distinct views of divine truth, of which our age is apt to boast, with all the holy fervour and earnestness which distinguished our most pious and popular authors of a past age."—*Christian Herald*, Dec. 1830.

4. DISCOURSES on IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, addressed to CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

"More important instruction cannot be communicated, and the manner of communication deserves not less praise."—*Ibid.* July, 1831.

5. FRIENDLY WARNINGS against DRUNKENNESS.

"They are remarkable, we think, for a truly felicitous blending of Christian faithfulness and tenderness, and of accuracy of detail, with chaste and graphic description. We have felt quite refreshed, indeed, with the originality of sentiment, simplicity of style, and elevated piety which pervade them."—*Temperance Society Record*, July, 1831.